The Vacant See in Early Modern Rome

Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions

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The Vacant See in Early Modern Rome

A Social History of the Papal Interregnum

By

John M. Hunt

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Cover illustration: Detail “Caporione che co’ molta gente armata,” from Nuoua et essatta pianta del conclaue con le funtioni e ceremonie per l'elettione del nuouo pontefice fatto nella sede vacante di Papa Clemente IX, by Giovanni Battista Falda (1670), courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The image shows the caporioni leading his patrol through the streets of Rome during the vacant see.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hunt, John M., author.
Title: The vacant see in early modern Rome : a social history of the papal interregnum / by John M. Hunt.
Description: Boston : Brill, 2016. | Series: Studies in medieval and Reformation traditions, ISSN 1573-4188 ; Volume 200 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016003655 (print) | LCCN 2016006764 (ebook)
ISBN 9789004313774 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9789004313781 (E-book)
Subjects: LCSH: Papacy—History—1566–1799. | Vacancy of the Holy See.
Classification: LCC BX955.3.H87 2016 (print) | LCC BX955.3 (ebook)
DDC 262/.1309031—dc23
LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2016003655

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Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: “Brill”. See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1573-4188
ISBN 978-90-04-31377-4 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-31378-1 (e-book)

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Acknowledgments

A book that was conceived and researched in Rome, written as a dissertation in Columbus (Ohio), revised in Louisville (Kentucky) and Jacksonville (Florida), and completed in Salt Lake City (Utah) naturally has received a lot of support from colleagues, friends, and institutions throughout the years. My first debt is to all the professors and fellow students at Ohio State University who contributed in great and small ways to its genesis and completion. In particular, my doctorate advisors Robert Davis and Geoffrey Parker read early drafts, suggested supportive insights to improve the work's arguments, and gave me ready counsel when needed.

I am grateful to the archivists and staff at the Archivio di Stato di Roma. Much of the extensive research for this book was completed there. I deeply appreciated the opportunity to spend many happy hours reading the court and police records of the Governor's Tribunal. Additionally, I am appreciative to many other archives and libraries that have supported my research efforts. These include the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the Capitoline archives of Rome, the Biblioteca Casanatense, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Getty Research Institute, the Newberry Library, the Marian Library of the University of Dayton, and the Houghton Library of Harvard University.

I owe infinite gratitude to Thomas Cohen of York University, who has been a constant source of sage advice throughout the years, serving as a virtual advisor on all things pertaining to the court records of the Governor's Tribunal and to early modern Rome. His friendly presence in the Archivio di Stato di Roma will always be welcomed.

A host of friends and colleagues have generously contributed to this volume in myriad ways. I thank those who have read chapters or parts of chapters. These include John Brackett, Thomas Cohen, Jennifer DeSilva, Filippo De Vivo, Eric Dursteler, Rachelle Fender, Liz Horodowich, James Nelson Novoa, Sheryl Reiss, Kenneth Stow, and Frank Thackeray. I am equally thankful for those who have given me advice, offered suggestions, and pushed me intellectually through stimulating conversations throughout the years of research and writing. These include Niall Atkinson, Ray Ball, James Bennett, Lyn Bennett, Guhan Borekci, John Brackett, Amy Brosius, Jan Cendese, Elizabeth Cohen, Charles Closmann, David Cressy, Glenn Crothers, Simon Davies, Filippo De Vivo, Jennifer DeSilva, Michele Di Sivo, Eric Dursteler, Rachelle Fender, John Findling, Puck Fletcher, Adam Fox, Irene Fosi, Michael Francis, Julia Hairston, Barbara Hanawalt, Sigrun Haude, F.P. Hunt, Liz Horodowich, Jack Horton,

Tracy K'Meyer, Mark Lentz, Vernon Minor, James Nelson Novoa, Laurie Nussdorfer, Andrea Ottone, Andrew Pettegree, Sheryl Reiss, Tammy Smithers, Frank Thackeray, Matt Vester, and Michele Wolfe. I also thank Martin Malcolm Elbl and Debra Fotheringham—the former for his wonderfully detailed maps and the latter for her assistance with indexing this volume.

At Brill, I must first thank Aryan van Dijk and Ivo Romein for their professional assistance and advice during the editing phase of publication. This book also benefitted from comments offered by the anonymous peer-reviewers and the skilled eye of copy-editor Meredith McGroarty. Their suggestions have made this a better work. Finally, I thank Andrew C. Gow, editor-in-chief of *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions*, for accepting my volume as part of this prestigious series. I am delighted that *The Vacant See in Early Modern Rome* will be the two-hundredth volume in the series.

My research has been generously funded by the Fulbright Commission, the Gladys K. Delmas Foundation, the Newberry Library, the Renaissance Society of America, Duke University, Ohio State University, and the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities gave me the opportunity to take part in two summer seminars, respectively at the Folger Shakespeare Library in 2010 and at the American Academy of Rome in 2011. Both seminars provided me with an exciting environment in which to discuss ideas with colleagues and think deeply about my research. I thank David Connelly and the Department of History and Political Science at Utah Valley University; the department has been generous in funding conferences and research trips, as well as providing time off from teaching duties to write.

Most importantly, I want to thank my sister Danielle for always being there for me and for being ever ready to support me with advice and good humor. Lastly, I dedicate this book to my father, Charlie, who has enthusiastically supported my academic endeavors.

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List of Abbreviations

ASC	Archivio Storico Capitolino
	Cred. Credenzone
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASM	Archivio di Stato di Mantova
ASR	Archivio di Stato di Roma
	TCG Tribunale criminale di Governatore di Roma
	TCS Tribunale crimianle di Senatore di Roma
ASRSP	*Archivio della società romana di storia patria*
AST	Archivio di Stato di Torino
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
	Misc. Arm. Miscellanea Armadio
ASVenice	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
	Barb.lat. Fondo Barberiniano Latino
	Urb.lat. Fondo Urbinate Latino
	Vat.lat. Fondo Vaticano Latino
BC	Biblioteca Casanatense
b.	busta
c.	case
cen.	century
cod.	codex
CSP	*Calendar of State Papers*
f.	filza
fol.	folio
FSL	The Folger Shakespeare Library
GRI	The Getty Research Institute
HOP	Ludwig von Pastor's *History of the Popes*
m.	mazzo
n. p.	not paginated
p.	page
SCJ	*Sixteenth Century Journal*
t.	tomo
vol.	volume

Notes on Currency, Weights, and Time

Currency

scudo = 100 *baiocchi*; money of account
giulio = 10 *baiocchi*; derived its name from Julius II
grosso = 5 *baiocchi*
baiocco = 1/100 of a *scudo*
quattrino = 1/5 of a *baiocco*

Weight

rubbio = a measure of capacity equivalent to 2.94 hectoliters.

Time

Italian time-keeping counted the hours from sunset. The first hour of night would translate as 6 PM at midwinter and around 10 PM at midsummer.

By the temporal points of this study (1559–1655), most Italian states had dated the beginning of their year from January 1. Documents using other points as a calendric reference point have been translated to the modern style.

Popes and Their Vacant Sees (1559–1655)

Popes (Family Name)	Pontificate	Duration of the Vacant See
Paul IV (Carafa)	1555–59	18 August–25 December 1559
Pius IV (Medici)	1559–65	9 December 1565–7 January 1566
Saint Pius V (Ghislieri)	1566–72	1 May–13 May 1572
Gregory XIII (Boncompagni)	1572–85	10 April–24 April 1585
Sixtus V (Peretti)	1585–90	27 August–15 September 1590
Urban VII (Castagna)	1590	27 September–5 December 1590
Gregory XIV (Sfondarti)	1590–91	16 October–29 October 1590
Innocent IX (Facchetti)	1591	30 December 1591–30 January 1592
Clement VIII (Aldobrandini)	1592–1605	3 March–1 April 1605
Leo XI (de' Medici)	1605	27 April–16 May 1605
Paul V (Borghese)	1605–21	28 January–9 February 1621
Gregory XV (Ludovisi)	1621–23	8 July–6 August 1623
Urban VIII (Barberini)	1623–44	29 July–15 September 1644
Innocent X (Pamphili)	1644–55	7 January–7 April 1655

Introduction

On 2 April 2005, John Paul II died after reigning as pope for nearly twenty-seven years, one of the longest pontificates in the history of the papacy. As a witness to his *sede vacante*, or the vacancy of the papal see, I saw pious pilgrims and curious Romans flock to St Peter's to view the dead pope. My landlady invited me to join her, as she made her way to the Vatican in order to "witness history." The entire world stopped to pay homage to the popular pontiff. But as a historian of papal Rome, I was more interested in the local perspective of the city's inhabitants. A quick trip to Pasquino—the focal point for church and government criticism in early modern and modern Rome—rewarded me with a heap of encomia dedicated to John Paul's memory rather than the sardonic and often inscrutable invectives called pasquinades that usually covered the ancient statue. John Paul's vacant see caught both Rome and the world in a reflective moment, as they focused on the good deeds of the Polish pope and on the election of his successor.

But four hundred years earlier, a different scene regularly played itself out in Rome during the vacant see. Early modern Romans, too, were caught up in a collective moment in the wake of a pope's death. On the one hand, just like their modern counterparts, Romans stirred with excitement and curiosity as they sought to discover news of the election of the next Vicar of Christ. On the other hand, a flood of negative emotions washed over the city and its populace as Romans assessed the pontificate of the dead pope and embarked on vendettas against enemies and neighborhood rivals. Romans voiced criticism in the forms of pasquinades posted on Pasquino and ballads sung in the streets against popes who raised tariffs on staple foods and curtailed the feudal liberties of the barony. In the case of popes who ruled with a heavy and severe hand, Romans could unite in collective opposition to their memory by assaulting their statues on the Capitoline Hill, the seat of the communal government and its officials. More frequent, however, were the brawls and popular duels that took place in the squares, streets, and other public spaces of the city. Romans believed the vacant see was the ideal time to execute vengeance against those who had slighted them, since popular opinion and tradition held that the pope's justice slept until the election of his successor. The coming of vagabonds, bandits, and soldiers from nearby towns and subject cities in the provinces only exacerbated the violence. Consequently, the vacant see opened up a new world of possibilities for Romans, who were used to respecting (or at least paying lip service to) law and order, as well as the subsequent social hierarchy, when the pope occupied his see (*sede piena*).

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This study seeks to understand and explain this enduring *mentalité*—to borrow a term from the Annales School—of the Roman people that held the vacant see to be the optimal time to seek vengeance against enemies and to protest against the dead pope's regime.[1] This *mentalité* persisted among Romans throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. For example, *Carbonari* conspirators planned insurrections in Rome and Bologna during Pius VIII's vacant see of 1830.[2] And the custom of writing pasquinades against the reputation and memory of popes after their deaths continued well into the 19th century. However, it was the early modern vacant sees that proved to be the most turbulent. This study focuses on the years 1559 to 1655—that is, from the vacant sees of Paul IV and Innocent X, a time of tremendous change for the papacy as it lost much of its international political clout at the conclusion of the Italian Wars (1559) and the Thirty Years' War (1648), while gaining a great deal of religious authority in the Catholic world with the conclusion of the Council of Trent (1563).[3]

The years between 1559 and 1655 also proved important to the papacy at home—in Rome and the Papal States. It was at this time that the papacy took major strides in developing a centralized, absolutist state. Popes between Paul IV and Innocent X subdued rebellious cities and independent polities with Papal States, tamed the rambunctious nobility in the provinces, and curtailed the liberties of the *Popolo Romano*, the civic magistrates of Rome.[4] Moreover, they sought to discipline the masses by criminalizing popular customs and mores. It was in these years that some of the most violent and tumultuous vacant sees took place in Rome. Indeed, the vacant sees of 1559, 1590, and 1644 witnessed violent demonstrations against the memory of Paul IV, Sixtus V, and Urban VIII, each of whom had imposed heavy taxes and stringent laws on the people. The vacant see could then serve as a reaction against and a check on the papal pretensions to absolutism.

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1 On the Annales School's concept of *mentalité*, see the five essays in *The Annales School: Critical Assessments*, ed. Stuart Clark (London, 1999), 2:381–489, especially Peter Burke's "Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities," 2:442–56.

2 Steven C. Hughes, *Crime, Disorder and the Risorgimento: The Politics of Policing in Bologna* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), pp. 105–06.

3 Anthony D. Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy: From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution, 1564–1789* (London, 1999).

4 On this process, see Paolo Prodi, *The Papal Prince, One Body and Two Souls: The Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Susan Haskins (Cambridge, Eng., 1987); and Jean Delumeau, "Le progrès de la centralisation dans l'Etat pontificial au XVI^e siècle," *Revue historique* 226 (1961), 399–410.

Such expressions of criticism could happen due to the nepotism inherent in papal government and its bureaucracy.[5] The reins of government at this time were personal and familiar: once elected, popes made room in the Curia for their relatives, friends, and clients. They also sought to enrich their families by using the papal treasury for private needs and by acquiring titles and lands. This all changed after Innocent XII abolished the curial office of cardinal-nephew and nepotism in general with his 1692 bull *Romanum decet Pontificem*. A modern bureaucracy developed in the wake of the bull—a system that was more "professional" than the earlier system marked by personal ties and venality.[6] This made papal governance less "personal," leaving Romans without a visible target on which to vent their anger.

Rome and Its People

The vacant see in Rome owed much of its violent and disruptive character to the papacy's unique social and political structures that distinguished it from other early modern states. Papal bulls expressly rejected any notion of dynastic continuity. Both papal law and ritual emphasized the vacant see's breakdown of government. Other states had interregna; however, most monarchies had some tradition of dynastic continuity. Those states that shared with the papacy a similar wariness of the dynastic principle—the Venetian Republic, the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, and the Holy Roman Empire—had all retained political structures that generally ensured stability and continuity of the government.[7] In Rome the pope's law and justice all but died with him. His tribunals pared down and a power void opened up that saw the College of Cardinals vie with the municipal government—the *Popolo Romano*—for

5 Reneta Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Rome, 1990); and Peter Partner, *The Pope's Men: The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1990).

6 On nepotism and its decline, see Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista: Papi, nipoti e burocrazia curiale tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome, 1999).

7 On the Venetian constitution regarding the ducal interregnum, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 263–89. On the rules regulating the interregna of the Holy Roman Empire and the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, see Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495–1806* (New York, 1999), pp. 34–35; and Robert I. Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655–1660* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp. 5 and 11–16. The Holy Roman Empire had one major crisis—the electoral dispute of 1619 that led to the Thirty Years' War—but that was an anomaly. For the interregnum and electoral crisis of 1619, see Brennan C. Pursell, *The Winter King: Frederick V of the Palatinate and the Coming of the Thirty Years' War* (Aldershot, 2003).

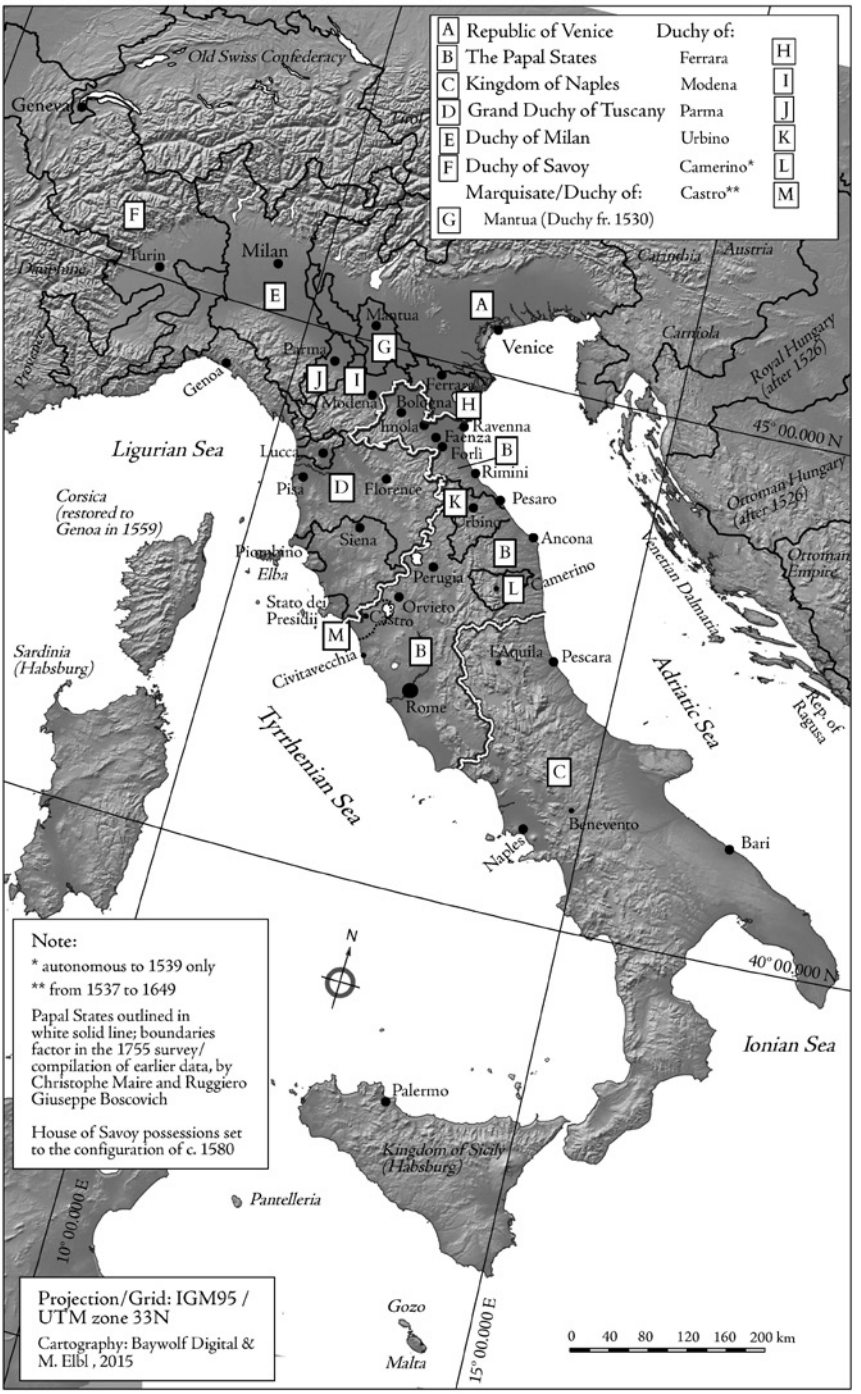

ILLUSTRATION 1 *Map of early modern Italy.*

jurisdictional supremacy. Individual nobles and commoners also saw this as a time to make their own claims to power and authority through violent self-help and criticism of the dead pope and his family.

Therefore, to understand Rome during the vacant see, we need to know the social and political structures that bound its people together during *sede piena*. It is best to see Rome as pyramid from which power and patronage flowed from top to bottom. At the top of this pyramid sat the living pope. The pope, as Machiavelli and Venetian ambassadors observed and as Paolo Prodi most recently discussed in his magisterial study of the papacy, was a monarch with two souls, a "re-papa."[8] As pope, he was the father of the Catholic world, which not only included the principal Catholic states of Europe but also new converts throughout the world brought into the fold through the efforts of the Tridentine ministry. He had a duty to discipline the popular customs of his flock, to combat heresy and the looming Turkish menace, and to proselytize the peoples of Asia and the Americas. At the same time, he was prince of the Papal States, a sizable kingdom in the center of the Italian peninsula that, along with Venice, was able to maintain a degree of independence after the conclusion of Italian Wars in 1559. As secular princes, early modern popes sought to subdue the rebellious city-states of the Marches and the Romagna, and to tame the violent nobility of Rome and of the Papal States. This instinct led the papacy to incorporate the duchies of Ferrara and Urbino into the Papal States once their rulers—vassals of the popes—died in 1598 and 1626, respectively. To regulate the subject cities and duchies, popes developed several bureaucratic offices and stationed cardinal-legates and governors in important provincial centers. In addition, with the loss of revenue from rebellious Protestant states and the independent Catholic monarchies, popes had to tax the provinces more heavily to finance missionary and pastoral activities as well as their grandiose schemes to make Rome into a capital city. Indeed, Prodi and Jean Delumeau have argued that early modern popes established the papacy as an absolute monarchy by centralizing the political structures of their state.[9] Conversely, Mario Caravale and Alberto Caracciolo, in their history of the medieval and early modern Papal States, argue that the ideal was far from the reality.[10] Bandits, renegade nobles,

8 Prodi, *The Papal Prince*.

9 Jean Delumeau, "Le progrès," pp. 399–410; Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 37–58 and 79–101; and Roberto Volpi, *Le regioni introvabili; Centralizzazione e regionalizzazione dello Stato pontificio* (Bologna, 1983), pp. 35–73.

10 Mario Caravale and Alberto Caracciolo, *Lo Stato pontificio da Martino V a Pio IX* (Turin, 1991 [1978]), pp. 343–46, 352–56, and 375–84. See also Christopher F. Black, "Perugia and Papal Absolutism in the Sixteenth Century," *English Historical Review* 96 (1981), 509–39.

and fiercely interdependent city-states continued to thwart the plans of the pope-kings. Thus, the reality did not always support the image of omnipotence that popes wished to convey to their subjects.[11]

The double nature of the pope carried special resonance in Rome, where the pope was both bishop of the city, with his cathedral of San Giovanni in Laterano, and patron of the people. In this role, the pope had certain duties. First, he had to maintain the grandeur of the city and its churches so that visiting pilgrims and dignitaries would be sufficiently impressed with the *caput mundi*. To achieve this, the pope strove to keep the streets in Rome clean and the highways leading to the city clear of brigands and other criminals. Second, he had to keep the Roman people supplied with bread and other staples. As such, early modern Romans ate much better than their contemporaries elsewhere in Italy and Europe.[12] Of course, the provinces, particularly the Marches, suffered under the needs of the capital: they were taxed heavily and saw much of their grain taken to feed the pampered Romans, whom papal officials feared might rebel if their needs were not met. The strategy worked. Romans never rebelled, not even at the times of intense famine in the 1590s and 1646–48. Yet, there was a price to pay for such security; the Roman economy and agrarian sector stagnated and remained underdeveloped well into the 19th century. Third, as pastors, popes were expected to give alms to the poor, to build hospitals, and to perform other charitable acts. This, too, met with trouble, as thousands of vagabonds descended upon Rome to take advantage of the dole. By the late 16th and early 17th centuries, they had become such a problem as to warrant the issuing of *bandi*, or decrees, outlawing able-bodied mendicants and patron-less foreigners from the city. In 1585 Sixtus V even sought to sequester a great body of them in the Hospital of San Sisto.[13] Finally, popes had to

11 See Irene Polverini Fosi, "Justice and Its Image: Political Propaganda and Judicial Reality in the Pontificate of Sixtus V," *SCJ* 24 (1993), 75–95; and Irene Fosi, *Papal Justice: Subjects and Court in the Papal State, 1500–1700*, trans. Thomas V. Cohen (Washington, D.C., 2011), pp. 77–104, 191–206, and 224–36.

12 See Jacques Revel, "A Capital City's Privileges: Food Supplies in Early Modern Rome," in *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, eds. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, trans. Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 37–49; Jean Delumeau, *Vie écomomique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1959), 2:626–55; Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), pp. 175–95; and Volker Reinhardt, *Überleben im der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt: Annona und Getreideversorgung in Rom, 1563–1797* (Tübingen, 1991).

13 On the efforts of popes to stem the flow of vagabonds into Rome, see Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:407–16; 413–15 for the Hospital of San Sisto.

aggrandize their families in the short time of their pontificate. The acquisition of papal offices for ecclesiastical nephews and noble titles for lay nephews was the norm. Various art programs and building projects not only beautified the city but also served as propaganda for the pope and his relatives. After the pope's death, his relatives, with their papal credentials, easily became permanent additions to the constellation of nobles in the city.[14]

Nevertheless, Rome was a hierarchically complex city with numerous nodes of power groups that worked with and sometimes clashed with the pope. Within the papal government, the College of Cardinals loomed as an important power. Since the bull *In nomine domini* of 1059, the college served as a "senate" to the pope, voting on papal policy in consistories and electing a new pope. This changed with the papacy's definitive return to Rome with Martin V in 1420. Throughout the next two centuries the college grew in size from twenty-four at the time of the Council of Constance (1414–18) to seventy by Sixtus V's pontificate.[15] The appointment of cardinals increasingly rested in the hands of the pope. This allowed the pope to make cardinals of relatives and allies, and to have them beholden to him. These were his so-called creatures, cardinals who would uphold his policies both during and after his pontificate.[16]

The weakening of the College of Cardinals as a political body continued with the creation of papal congregations in the second half of the 16th century. In 1542, Paul III created the first congregation, the Inquisition. Paul IV followed with the first council of state, the "Consulta di Stato," in 1559 on the occasion of exiling his rebellious nephews.[17] Once again, the process culminated with Sixtus V, who in 1588 organized fifteen congregations that oversaw both secular and ecclesiastical affairs throughout the Papal States and the Catholic world. Clement VIII added the Congregation of the "Buon Governo" in 1592 to regulate more efficiently the finances of the various communes of the Papal States. Excluding the majority of the cardinals from their proceedings, the pope allowed his cardinal-nephew and a small group of intimates to monopolize the decision-making that occurred in the congregations.[18] In a report of 1640,

14 Wolfgang Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Princes, Patrons, and the Nobility*, eds. Ronald Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford, 1991), pp. 329–56.

15 Denys Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 1977), pp. 37–38; and Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 82–86.

16 Massimo Firpo, "The Cardinal," in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. Eugenio Garin, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 1991), pp. 92–94.

17 Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, p. 86.

18 On this process, see Caravale and Caracciolo, *Lo Stato pontificio*, pp. 383–87; and Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 81–91.

the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Nani wrote that "[i]f ever the pope's will has been absolute, it is at the present. Everyone is excluded from participation in state affairs, which are all referred to the pope to resolve, to the nephew to direct, and to some minister to execute."[19]

Located across the Tiber on the opposite end of town from the Vatican was the third power group—the municipal government of Rome situated atop the Capitol Hill, the ancient religious center of the Roman Republic. This civic body, called the *Popolo Romano* after the SPQR of the classical republic, had developed over the course of the 12th century and asserted a greater political authority over the city at the time of the Avignon papacy and the Great Schism.[20] As with the cardinals, with the return of the papacy after Martin, the authority of the *Popolo Romano* gradually deteriorated. The process, as with the College of Cardinals, culminated in the 16th and 17th centuries when the popes sought to assert themselves over all independent powers in Rome and the Papal States. The chief civic magistrates of the *Popolo Romano* included three conservators who led the city's two elite assemblies and acted as direct representatives between the city and the papacy. Equally important were fourteen *caporioni*, representatives of each of the city's fourteen quarters (*rioni*) who led the civic militia in moments of crisis and emergency, including the vacant see.[21] Another integral figure of the municipal government was the senator, a noble trained in jurisprudence who was from somewhere outside of Rome but was usually from the Papal States, and who was chosen by the pope.[22] Compared to other Italian states, such as Genoa and Venice, the Roman civic government remained open to new blood, perhaps just because it

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19 "Relazione of Giovanni Nanni," in Nicolò Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet, eds., *Relazioni degli Stati europei lette al Senato dagli ambasciatori veneti nel secolo decimosettimo*, ser. III (Venice, 1856), 2:24–25. Nanni was not the only Venetian ambassador to note this change; see also the reports of Paolo Paruta of 1585, Francesco Contarini of 1609, and Nicolò Sagredo of 1661. Sagredo commented that Alexander VII had held only one congregation of state in seven years, adding that "even to this day, he makes fun of it." For Paruta, see Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ser. II (Florence, 1857), 4:460. For Contarini and Sagredo, see Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni degli Stati europei*, ser. III, 1:89–90, and 2:234.

20 Robert Brentano, *Rome before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth-Century Rome* (1974; repr. Berkeley, 1990), pp. 93–98. See also Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN, 1985), pp. 247–48.

21 On the *Popolo Romano*, see Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 58–94; and Niccolò Del Re, *La curia capitolina e tre altri antichi organi giudiziari romani* (Rome, 1993), pp. 13–25

22 On the senator of Rome, see Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 69–71.

had lost much of its authority in the early modern era. Foreign families could easily enter among the ranks of the ruling elite.[23] Although Laurie Nussdorfer has persuasively argued for the continued relevancy of the civic regime, early modern popes nevertheless increasingly dominated the ritual and political scene of Rome. This was demonstrated by the burgeoning power of the principal papal criminal tribunal, the governor of Rome, which gained jurisdictional supremacy over the other tribunals of the city, including the senator's, and by the fact that the senator owed fealty to the pope, not the *Popolo Romano*. The civic magistrates and their tribunal continued to exist well into the 19th century, but like many papal offices, only with a modicum of the power that they had enjoyed in the Middle Ages.[24]

The old Roman barony added another layer to the hierarchical structure of early modern Rome. Closely connected to the *Popolo Romano*, members from these illustrious families had dominated Roman affairs since the 10th century and had been a constant source of violence in the city and the countryside. The Orsini, Colonna, Conti, and Savelli were the most powerful of these aristocratic clans, but just below them stood the Caetani, Cenci, and Mattei, as well as a host of lesser luminaries.[25] These families counted powerful cardinals, abbots, and even popes among their ancestors and continued to maintain at least one member in the College of Cardinals in the early modern era. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries new families of foreign origins joined their ranks. The fastest way to ascend to the Roman nobility was to have a family member elected pope. This is how the Medici, Aldobrandini, Borghese, Barberini, and Chigi all rose to power. Regardless of their origin, each family gathered around its distinctive palace that displayed its magnificence to the city. Rather than the fortified towers of medieval era, their residences embodied the aesthetic of the Renaissance and Baroque. Nevertheless, like the medieval towers, these

23 On the open nature of the *Popolo Romano*, see Richard Ferraro, "The Nobility of Rome, 1560–1700: A Study of Its Composition, Wealth and Investment," doctoral dissertation (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994), pp. 45–46 and 99–100; and Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 96–98.

24 On the increasing power of the governor's tribunal over urban tribunals, including the senator's, see Peter Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität in Rom, 1560–1585* (Tübingen, 1995), pp. 11–14 and 39–44; Michele Di Sivo, "Roman Criminal Justice between State and City: The Reform of Paul V," in *Rome/Amsterdam: Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 282–84; Alessandra Camerano, "Senatore e Governatore: Due tribunali a confronto nella Roma del XVI secolo," *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 5 (1997), 41–66; and Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 28–34.

25 For a good encyclopedic starting point for the Roman nobility, see Claudio Rendina, *Le grandi famiglie di Roma* (Rome, 2004).

palaces dominated the city squares, providing a focal point for family solidarity in the neighborhood. The most important families sought to maintain several palaces and chapels throughout the city to broadcast their pretension to a larger audience.[26] However, the true source of power, especially for the old nobility, remained their feudal estates outside of Rome. They could always escape the oppressive policies of the papacy by returning to their castles in the countryside. Indeed, many of the more youthful or rebellious scions of the baronial families remained a constant source of disorder throughout the early modern era.[27]

Added to this jumble of power elites in Rome were the ambassadors of the various Catholic states of Europe and their cardinals. The palaces of these foreign potentates served as islands to which their fellow countrymen and countrywomen gravitated for protection and assistance. Not only did foreign cardinals and ambassadors sustain their foreign communities through work and charity, but also the very space of their palaces became a haven for their wayward *paesani*, or fellow countrymen. The immediate area around the palace door—the *franchigia*—became a place of sanctuary for criminals escaping from the law. All of the major Catholic powers, including those from the various Italian states, maintained communities in Rome, yet the most powerful were those of the Spanish and the French. The ambassadors of both states used Roman streets to wage an informal battle of supremacy. Throughout the 16th century, the Spanish proved more adept at playing power politics in Rome. Much Spanish silver flowed into the city, paying for the construction of the city monuments, including St Peter's.[28] Meanwhile, Spanish soldiers often

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26 On noble building strategies, see Joseph Connor, "Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism," *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 25 (1989), 207–59; and Maria Luisa Madonna and Mario Bevilacqua, "The Roman Families and Urban Development," in van Kessel and Schulte, *Rome/Amsterdam*, pp. 104–23. See also Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy," pp. 329–56. For an excellent case study of a noble family's urban strategy, see Mario Bevilacqua, *Il Monte dei Cenci: Una famiglia romana e il suo insediamento urbano dal medioevo all'età barocca* (Rome, 1988).

27 Irene Polverini Fosi, "Signori e tribunali: Criminalità nobiliare e giustizia pontificia nella Roma del Cinquecento," in *Signori, patrizi, cavalieri in Italia centro-meridionale nell'età moderna*, ed. Maria Antoinetta Visceglia (Rome, 1992), pp. 214–30; and Fosi, *Papal Justice*, 77–104.

28 On the Spanish community and its influence on the papacy, see Thomas Dandelet, *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700* (New Haven, 2001); and Alessandra Anselmi, "Il quartiere dell'ambascita di Spagna," in *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri, XIV–XVIII secolo*, eds. Donatella Calabi and Paola Lanaro (Rome, 1998), pp. 206–21. On the Spanish role in financing St Peter's, see Dandelet, "Paying for the New St. Peter's: Contributions to the Construction

had to help the pope defend his state from bandits and foreign threats. By the 17th century, the French had caught up with the Spanish in asserting their influence on the city.[29] This contest always heated up during the vacant see, as each diplomat sought to influence the papal election.

Below the pope and the city's elites were the people of Rome, a heterogeneous group of artisans, day laborers, servants, and agricultural workers. Rome's economy, parasitical to the core, prevented the emergence of a strong mercantile class. Nevertheless, brokers, bankers, and long-distance merchants—usually of Florentine extraction—based themselves in the area near Ponte Sant'Angelo called the Banchi, the Banks. During the vacant see, the Banchi became a major focal point for news pertaining to the conclave, and it was also where brokers took wagers on the outcome of the papal election.[30]

The majority of Romans lived in the eastern half of the city. After 10th-century Normans destroyed all of the aqueducts leading to the hilly, ancient quarters of the city called the Monti, the populace moved west to the plains along the banks of the Tiber River.[31] This area, as well as the markets of Campo dei Fiori and Piazza Navona, continued to play an important role in the social life of the people. The ancient population center, situated around the Capitoline and the Roman Forum, became desolate during the Middle Ages. Well into the 16th century, shepherds grazed their cattle and sheep in the Roman Forum, earning it the new name *Campo Vaccino*, "the cow field." In the Monti and along much of the northern part of the city—still within the Aurelian walls—could be found large gardens and vineyards, often worked by farmers but sometimes also by artisans and other laborers in their spare time.

Starting with Nicholas V and continuing well into the 17th century, popes sought to beautify and rationalize the space of the city.[32] This was often done

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of the New Basilica from Spanish Lands, 1506–1620," in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion, 1500–1700*, eds. Thomas Dandelet and John A. Marino (Leiden, 2007), pp. 180–195.

29 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:201–02.

30 On the Banchi, see Allan Ceen, *Quartiere de' Banchi: Urban Planning in Rome in the First Half of the Cinquecento* (New York, 1986). On brokers and wagering on the papal election, see John M. Hunt, "The Conclave from the 'Outside In': Rumor, Disorder and Speculation in Rome during Early Modern Papal Elections," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012), 367–74.

31 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:225.

32 On Nicholas V, see Carroll William Westfall, *In This Most Perfect Paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447–55* (University Park, Pa., 1974). On the urbanization schemes of subsequent popes of the Renaissance and Baroque, see Paolo Portoghesi, *Roma barocca* (1966; repr. Rome, 1987), pp. 39–53; and Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:221–363.

with the needs of pilgrims and other visitors in mind, as broadening and straightening Rome's narrow streets was a major enterprise of 16th-century popes that culminated in the efforts of Sixtus V.[33] Popes also encouraged the populace to move beyond the city's core to the north and west of the city—into the quarters of Campo Marzio and Monti, respectively. Sometimes force was used, as in the case of the city's prostitutes, whom popes Pius V and Clement VIII confined to an area in the quarter known as the Ortaccio, "the wicked garden," located in Campo Marzio. Due to the frequent flooding of the Tiber, Sixtus V encouraged the repopulation of the Monti. He gave special incentives, including tax exemptions, to Romans who moved there.[34] Despite the movement of its people, Rome's neighborhoods remained quite heterogeneous. Nobles and commoners lived intimately side by side. Indeed, nobles, cardinals, and ambassadors hired many of their neighbors as servants or acted as their patrons.

The term *Roman* can be misleading, since Rome was a city of foreigners. Immigrants from all over Italy and Europe came to reside in the city of popes, both on a permanent and a temporary basis. Many came because of the numerous work opportunities the capital had to offer, finding jobs either as servants or as seasonal laborers. Fellow countrymen followed cardinals from their region to the city in search of work in the city and the court. The same was true of popes.[35] Florentines flocked to Rome under the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII, while the so-called Tedeschi—that is, Lombards—came during

33 Charles Burroughs, "Absolutism and the Rhetoric of Topography: Streets in the Rome of Sixtus V," in *Streets: Critical Perspectives in Public Space*, eds. Zeynep Çelik, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 189–202; and Helge Gamrath, *Roma sancta renovata: Studi sull'urbanistica di Roma nella seconda metà del secolo XVI con particolare riferimento al pontificato di Sisto V, 1585–1590* (Rome, 1987). See also the contemporary account of the architect Domenico Fontana on Sixtus's urban renovation, *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco Vaticano e delle fabriche di Nostro Signore Papa Sisto V* (Rome, 1590).

34 On the sequestering of the prostitutes in the Ortaccio, see Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Seen and Known: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late Sixteenth-Century Rome," *Renaissance Studies* 12 (1998), 392–409; and Tessa Storey, *Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 73–74. On the urban strategy of Sixtus V, see René Schiffmann, *Roma felix: Aspekte der städtbaulichen Gestaltung Roms unter Papst Sixtus V* (Bern, 1985); and Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:310–27.

35 Eleanora Canepari, "Mestiere e spazio urbano nella costruzione di legami sociali degli immigrati a Roma in età moderna," in *L'Italia delle migrazioni interne: Donne, uomini e contemporanea*, eds. Angiolina Arru and Franco Ramella (Rome, 2003), p. 36.

the pontificate of the Milanese pope Pius IV.[36] But the foreign nature of the Roman people can be emphasized too greatly. Egmont Lee, working with the census of 1527, which was taken just before Charles V's men sacked the city, has argued that Italians from the Roman countryside and the Papal States far outnumbered the true foreigners. He suggests that these Italian immigrants quickly acquainted themselves with the culture of the city and thus became "Romanized."[37] Consequently, I will use the term "Roman" as an umbrella term for inhabitants of Rome, knowing full well that it encompasses several "nationalities."

This Rome, full of "Romanized" foreigners, was also a city of men.[38] As a center of the Catholic world and home of the papal court, Rome had a concentrated population of cardinals, prelates, ambassadors, and noblemen. These lay and ecclesiastical elites needed a staff of servants to run their households. Moreover, the papal court and these smaller courts of cardinals and noblemen needed furniture and vestments to decorate themselves and their houses.[39] As a consequence, men from all over Italy and Europe flocked to Rome to find positions as servants and guards in elite palaces or to find work as artisans in the various workshops of the city.[40] These men not only outnumbered women—by a ratio of two to one—but also contributed greatly to the violence of the city. As we shall see, during the vacant see these men fought over

36 On the Florentines and Milanese in Rome, see Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:207–13; and Irene Fosi, "*Roma patria comune*? Foreigners in Early Modern Rome," in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, eds. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 31–35.

37 Egmont Lee, "Foreigners in Quattrocento Rome," *Renaissance and Reformation* 5 (1983), 135–46. Based on the census of 1527, Lee suggests that 50 to 70 per cent of the population of the city was Romanized and another 5 to 15 per cent came from the Roman countryside (and thus easily acclimated themselves to Roman society).

38 Eugenio Sonnino, "In the Male City: The 'Status Animorum' of Rome in the Seventeenth Century," in *Socio-economic consequences of sex-ratios in historical perspective, 1500–1900*, eds. Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Sölvi Sogner (Milan, 1994), pp. 20–21; and Laurie Nussdorfer, "Men at Home in Baroque Rome," *I Tatti: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014), 103–30; and Eleanora Canepari, "Cohabitations, Household Structures, and Gender Identities in Seventeenth Century Rome," *I Tatti: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014), 131–54.

39 Gigliola Fragnito, "Cardinals' Courts in Sixteenth-Century Rome," *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993), 26–56.

40 Eleanora Canepari, "Occasioni di conoscenza: Mobilità, socialità e appartenenze nella Roma moderna," in *Donne e uomini migranti: Storie e geografie tra breve e lunga distanz*a, eds. Angiolina Arru, Daniela Luigia Caglioti, and Franco Ramella (Rome, 2008), pp. 301–28.

courtesans, prostitutes and lovers in a situation made worse by the influx of soldiers and bandits from Umbria and the Marches looking for work as city and conclave guards.

In addition to these "stable" Romans who worked as artisans and servants, there was a vast floating population of seasonal and part-time workers, pilgrims, and vagabonds. The former came to work in the vineyards and farms around the city at harvest time, or to find unskilled and poorly paid work throughout the year. They tended to come from the Roman countryside, and further afield from parts of Lazio and even Umbria.[41] Pilgrims, a mainstay of the economy for taverns, inns, and the trade in religious trinkets, descended upon Rome all year round but particularly at Easter and in Holy Years. Their numbers could be quite impressive. During the Holy Years of 1575 and 1600, 400,000 and 550,000 pilgrims, respectively, visited Rome and its churches.[42] Considering that Rome had a population that hovered near 100,000 between 1580 and 1660, this was a huge number that no doubt caused many problems.[43] As mentioned, the latter group, the vagabonds, became a growing problem in the latter half of the 16th century and continued to vex Rome throughout the 17th century. The vagabonds were attracted to the alms that the pope, as the charitable father, gave to the needy. The Roman nobility's turn to pasturage in the latter 16th century only exacerbated the large numbers of the idle poor by reducing the number of peasants needed to work the land.[44] A treatise on beggars in Rome, published in 1693, complained of the "number of poor men grew beyond measure, and their solicitation [of alms] not only disturbs the rest of the wealthy in their houses and in the public streets, but with extreme irreverence also interrupt the most holy mysteries in the churches."[45] Starting from the pontificate of Pius V, popes outlawed begging near churches and sought to either ban vagabonds from the city or put them to work in the papal galleys.

The vacant see, as a social phenomenon, highlighted the unique character of Rome, a city tied to the life, death, and election of popes. In the time of the vacant see the people of Rome, accustomed to the privileges of a capital city,

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41 Giorgio Rossi, *L'Agro di Roma tra '500 e '800: Condizioni di vita e lavoro* (Rome, 1985), pp. 46–50.

42 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:171–73; and Mario Romani, *Pellegrini e viaggiatori nell'economia di Roma dal XIV al XVII* (Milan, 1948), pp. 16–17.

43 Karl Julius Beloch, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Italiens* (Berlin, 1939), 2:13.

44 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:566–78.

45 Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza, *La mendictà proveduta, nella città di Roma collo spazio publico, fondato dalla Pietà, e Benificenza di Nostro Signore, Innocenzo XII, Pontefice Massimo* (Rome, 1693), pp. 21–22.

mocked the memory of popes who could not feed them, and even assaulted the statues of popes judged in death as "tyrants" who failed in their duty as princes and as the Vicars of Christ. The various power elites of the city, from the *Popolo Romano* to individual barons, sought to exert themselves in the absence of their lord. Elites and commoners alike sought vengeance against rivals and foes, turning the squares and shops into battlegrounds where old scores were settled and honor restored. Petty criminals and ruffians, often bandits, came to Rome to sell their services as guards, thugs, and assassins. The vacant see thus presented Romans the opportunity to achieve all sorts of personal and collective agendas in an empowering but fleeting moment.

The Vacant See and Historians

Despite its impact on Rome, until recently the vacant see has received little scholarly attention as a political and social phenomenon. Following the lead of Leopold von Ranke and Ludwig von Pastor, scholarship until recently has concentrated exclusively on the papal election that took place during the vacant see.[46] Studies in this vein concentrated on high politics: the intrigues within the conclave and influence of the great Catholic powers on the election. They displayed little concern for public opinion of the Romans in the streets and avoided any serious discussion of the violence that marked the papal interregnum.

Lorenzo Spinelli, in the middle of the 20th century, was the first scholar to examine aspects of the vacant see beyond the election of the pope. In *La vacanza della Sede apostolica*, he traced the evolution of the College of Cardinals as the primary regents of the Apostolic See in the pope's absence from the origins of the papacy in antiquity until Pius IV's bull, *In eligendis*, of 1562. Spinelli showed the powers of the cardinals were severely circumscribed by tradition, canon law, and papal bulls. Besides participating in the election of

46 For the classic studies, see Ludwig von Pastor, *HOP*, 40 vols. (London, 1898–1953); and Leopold von Ranke, *The History of the Popes: Their Church and State and Especially their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth Century and Seventeenth Centuries*, 3 vols. (London, 1847–48). For up-to-date general accounts, see Alberto Melloni, *Il Conclave: Storia di una istituzione* (Bologna, 2001); and Frederic J. Baumgarter, *Behind Locked Doors: A History of Papal Elections* (New York, 2003). For recent studies on the conclave, see Miles Pattenden, "The Conclaves of 1590 to 1592: An Electoral Crisis of the Early Modern Papacy?" *SCJ* 44 (2013), 391–410; Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa: Norme, rit e conflittti: L'Età moderna* (Rome, 2013); and Hunt, "The Conclave," pp. 355–82.

the new pontiff, the College of Cardinals' authority during the vacant see was limited to upholding the law. Its members could not make permanent decisions affecting church doctrine or the governance of the Papal States.[47]

Only three decades later did the vacant see receive a fuller treatment, one that encompassed more than the College of Cardinals and that provided an examination of the vacant see's impact on the entire city. Laurie Nussdorfer, in a chapter of her magisterial work *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*, provided a snapshot of one pope's vacant see. In her account she examined the arguments and jurisdictional contests between the College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*, the two principal interregnal authorities during Urban VIII's vacant see, arguing that the civic officials asserted themselves as a group after the pope's death. She also depicted the vacant see as a time of protest against the Barberini and their regime.[48] Nussdorfer made several important arguments but only studied Urban VIII's vacant see and did not examine the violence, particularly the acts of vengeance, which marked Rome in the wake of the pope's death.

Recently Joëlle Rollo-Koster has emphasized the role of violence in the vacant see in her *Raiding Saint Peter*.[49] By examining the vacant see of 1378, which saw the election of Urban VI and the eventual creation of the Great Schism, Rollo-Koster sought to make broader statements about papal vacant sees. She described the vacant see as a liminal moment in which the people of Rome could take part in ritual pillages and other violent acts as a means of expressing their will. Although her goal was to understand the actions of people taking part in ritual pillages, much of her book is dedicated to discussing the liminal theory. As such, her study tells us more about anthropological theory than the actual beliefs behind the practice of ritual pillages or the *mentalité* attached to the vacant see. Thus, her study demonstrates what Philippe

47 Lorenzo Spinelli, *La vacanza della Sede apostolica dalle origini al Concilio tridentino* (Milan, 1955).

48 Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 228–53. See also Nussdorfer, "The Vacant See: Ritual and Protest in Early Modern Rome," *SCJ* 18 (1987), 173–89.

49 Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter: Empty Sees, Violence, and the Initiation of the Great Western Schism, 1378* (Leiden, 2008). See also Rollo-Koster, "Looting the Empty See: The Great Western Schism Revisited (1378)," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 59 (2005), 429–74; and , for a similar argument, Martine Boiteux, "La vacance du Siège Pontifical: De la mort et des funérailles à l'investiture du pape: Le rites de l'époque moderne," in *Religious Ceremonials and Images: Power and Meaning, 1400–1700*, ed. José Pedro Paiva (Coimbra, 2002), pp. 103–53. On liminality, see Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago, 1969); Arnold van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (1909; repr. Chicago, 1961); and Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), pp. 19–20.

Buc has called the "dangers of ritual," the problems that historians face when applying ritual theory to past documents.[50]

Most of the scholarly attention on the vacant see has focused on the ritual pillages that frequently occurred either at a pope's or bishop's death during the early and high Middle Ages or after a pope's election during the early modern era.[51] A tradition whose origins are obscure, ritual pillages saw members of the clergy and the community looting the belongings of the dead prelate. The phenomenon has a long history. The first incidence of these pillages took place after the deaths of bishops and popes in the early Middle Ages. Members of the clergy were the main participants in these early pillages. Numerous decrees of early councils and synods denounced the custom and placed responsibility for protecting the dead bishop's tomb on the neighboring bishop who presided over his funeral rites.[52] The first occurrence of pillaging a dead pope's property occurred after the death of Adrian III in 885. When his successor, Stephen V, took possession of the Lateran Palace as the bishop of Rome, he found its treasury of liturgical ornaments emptied. After a long hiatus, the next episode of pillaging of a dead pope's possessions took place at the rumored death of Honorius III in 1227. According to the English chronicler Matthew Paris, the ailing pope had to make an appearance at the window of the Lateran Palace to disperse the Roman people—the first mention of their participation in the event—who had "begun to unleash themselves against the pontifical goods."[53] After the vacant see of Honorius, references to ritual pillages disappeared from the chronicles of medieval historians and the corpus of canon law, but they reappeared in altered form in the 15th century after the announcement of a pope's election.

Nineteenth-century historian Lucius Lector was the first scholar to examine the ritual pillages tied to the papal election in any serious way (albeit in two short pages). Lector asserted that medieval Europeans, including Romans,

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50 Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001); and Geoffrey Koziol, "The Danger of Polemic: Is Ritual Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study," *Early Medieval History* 2 (2002), 367–88.

51 The term was coined by Carlo Ginzburg in his "Ritual Pillages: A Preface to Research in Progress," in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, trans. Eren Branach (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 20–41. See also Guillaume Mollat, "A propos du droit de dépouille," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 39 (1933), 316–43; and Reinhard Elze, "'*Sic transit gloria mundi*': la morte del papa nel medioevo," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 3 (1977), 23–41.

52 For the synods, see Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, trans. David S. Peterson (Chicago, 2000), pp. 99–102; and Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 100–01 and 119–22.

53 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 101–03 and 103.

learned the custom of sacking the possessions of dead prelates from the Goths and Lombards, and that it signified that these episcopal and papal goods were held in common as members of the Christian community. In Rome, the inhabitants always launched their pillages on the papal goods housed in the Lateran Palace, never touching the personal goods of the pontiff. Lector noted that the custom seemed to stop with Honorius but returned as electoral pillages during the 15th century. Now, Romans and conclavists sacked the palace and cells of the pope-elect and sometimes, whether intentionally or not, also sacked those of nearby cardinals or cardinals who they mistakenly thought had been elected. The practice continued until the cardinal chamberlain, Gaetano Altieri outlawed the practice in 1721.[54]

In his study of the popular and theological beliefs and rituals surrounding the pope's body, Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani adapted and deepened many of Lector's earlier observations. He argued that the ritual pillages represented the people's connection to the institutions of the church and the pope. He added some important arguments to Lector's ideas. First, he noted that ritual pillages disappeared after Honorius III because most popes after him lived away from Rome due to the internecine fighting between the noble factions of Rome. Indeed, for a while Viterbo became the center of papal elections. Second, he pointed out that the new goods that the conclavists and Romans sacked upon the election of the pope were the private property of the pope, not the goods in common belonging to the pope's flock.[55]

In her account of the vacant see of 1378, Rollo-Koster pushed the appearance of the ritual pillages associated with the election of the pope to the 14th century. She found that Romans—who had not witnessed a papal election, nor had they participated in an interregnal sack—remembered the rudiments of the custom, pillaging the residence of Cardinal Tebaldeschi, the Cardinal of St Peter's, when a rumor spread throughout the city that he had been elected. She convincingly argues that Romans created the new ritual of sacking the pope-elect's palace. To her, this was a vestige of the *vox populi, vox dei*, an early tradition that the community of Rome had the right to elect the pope. She claims, however, this was the illusion of participation, implying that their efforts were for naught.[56]

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54 Lucius Lector, *L'élection papale* (Paris, 1898), pp. 270–71.

55 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 150–54.

56 Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 167–223. Also see Rollo-Koster, "Episcopal and Papal Vacancies: A Long History of Violence," in *Ecclesia et Violentia: Violence against the Church and within the Church in the Middle Ages*, eds. Radosław Kotecki and Jacek Maciejewski (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), pp. 54–70.

Carlo Ginzburg, in a very influential article written with several of his students at the University of Bologna, also looked at the interregnal pillages. Ginzburg called them "ritual pillages" and never made the distinction between the pillages that occurred at the death of popes and those that occurred at their election, as Lector, Paravinci-Bagliani, and Rollo-Koster have recently done. He grouped together various episodes that shared little in common, including political protests against Paul IV that were derived from a different impulse, and ignored the political background behind the events. Ginzburg mostly studied the "electoral pillages," arguing that they were a ritual that highlighted the new pontiff's transformation into his "new superpersona." This unsatisfactory argument relegates the pillagers to a ritual function without really exploring their beliefs. Ginzburg did note that the pillages reflected the connection that the Romans as well other followers (he examined the phenomenon in Bologna and Mantua as well) had with their ruler and patron.[57]

Andreas Rehberg has recently weighed in on the debate by cautioning against seeing these pillages as spontaneous rituals representing the will and opinion of the masses. Rather, he sees an elite hand behind the ritual actions of the people. Roman Barons led these assaults against the property of the dead popes and their families.[58] Chapter 5 of this book continues Rehberg's argument by placing assaults against the statues of dead popes at the Capitol in the context of ritual pillages. While not as pessimistic as Rehberg about the people's participation in these assaults, I nevertheless argue that the *Popolo Romano* and the Roman nobility played a dominant role in directing the actions of the crowd. Yet, without the mutual involvement of either elites or commoners, these ritual assaults were less than spectacular.

The study will thus examine a long-engrained *mentalité* among the Roman people that saw the vacant see as an opportunity to perform a variety of activities that were illicit during the *sede piena*. In this way, the vacant see resembled Carnival and other forms of festive misrule in early modern Europe.

57 Ginzburg, "Ritual Pillages," pp. 20–41. Sergio Bertelli extended Ginzburg's argument to secular rulers as well as the pope, arguing that the pillages symbolized the personal ties between subject and ruler. Thus, he ignored the unique ecclesiastical nature of the papal monarch. See Bertelli, *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, trans. R. Burr Litchfield (University Park, Pa., 2001), pp. 41–43.

58 Andreas Rehberg, "Sacrum enim opinatur, quicquid inde rapina auferunt: Alcune osservazioni intorno ai 'saccheggi rituali' di interregno a Roma (1378–1534)," in *Pompa sacra: Lusso e cultura matierale alla corte papale nel Basso Medievo, 1420–1527*, ed. Thomas Ertl (Rome, 2010), pp. 201–37. See also Andreas Rehberg and Anna Modigliani, "'Saccheggi rituali' nell'ambito curiale-romana: Una chimera degli antropologi," *Roma nel Rinascimento* (2008), 25–36.

Like Carnival, the vacant see presented Romans with an opportunity to protest governmental polices and to mock the dead pope and his family.[59] And, like the violent episodes that occurred during the Carnivals of Udine in 1511 and the French town of Romans in 1580, the vacant sees sparked riots against the papacy, but never full-scale revolts.[60] However, while Carnival potentially carried the elements that could provoke violence, the vacant see always produced some form of violence and disorder in Rome.

However, the two social phenomena were also quite different. Carnival and other forms of festive misrule were based on the Christian liturgical calendar. They were tied to the celebration of the life, death, and afterlife of Jesus Christ. In this regard, the misrule and disorder were always predictable according to an established date.[61] The vacant see, on the other hand, was based on the death of the pope, which meant that there was always an element of unpredictability in its coming. Romans both anticipated and feared the death of the pope, and a sickly pope could keep the city on edge for weeks, or even months.

Additionally, the emotional releases of both phenomena differed greatly.[62] Whereas laughter, joy, and indulgence dominated Carnival, during the vacant see hatred, anger, and revenge reigned supreme among the populace. Yet, the anger of the people could be colored by joy, as in the news of a particularly reviled pope's death being received with outbursts of celebration. As such, the vacant see almost invariably produced brawls, fights, and even murders in addition to protests against papal policy. Both Carnival and the vacant see worried early modern rulers. Indeed, in Rome, Carnival activities were attenuated or even canceled when they coincided with the vacant see—

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59 On Carnival and festive misrule, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978), pp. 178–204; Linda L. Carroll, "Carnival Rites as Vehicles of Protest in Renaissance Venice," *SCJ* 16 (1985), 487–502; Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," in eadem, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), pp. 97–123; and Chris Humphrey, *The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Medieval England* (Manchester, 2001).

60 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival at Romans* (New York, 1980); and Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1993).

61 Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996); Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 55–80; and Charles Pythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450–1550," in *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500–1700: Essays in Urban History*, eds. Peter Clark and Peter Slack (Toronto, 1972), pp. 57–85.

62 On the historical study of emotion, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, ed., *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 1998).

no doubt out of respect for the dead pope, but also due to the potential for greater chaos. Generally, however, despite Counter-Reformation popes placing greater emphasis on edifying Jesuit plays and devotional forty-hour celebrations, they made no effort to abolish the popular festivities. The vacant see, in contrast, worried popes before they died. They made every effort to ensure a peaceful vacant see. The principal interregnal bodies—the College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*—undertook measures to police the people. However, their inadequate efforts were in vain. By the late 16th century, the governor's *sbirri*, or constables, started to patrol the streets to maintain some semblance of order.

This tome offers the first social history of the vacant see. The first two chapters of this study examine the political and ritual structures of the vacant see in Rome. Chapter 1 demonstrates that the political vacuum left by the pope's death was only partially filled by the *Popolo Romano* and the College of Cardinals, who competed with each other in a war of decrees (sometimes also in physical altercations through their constables) for jurisdictional supremacy over Rome. Chapter 2 examines the official rites and popular customs that announced the pope's death and the vacant see. Both chapters reveal that the very political and ritual structures that were supposed to provide for peace and stability served to promote violence and disorder in Rome.

The next two chapters explore the personal and collective violence that spiked in the wake of the pope's death and the cessation of his law. Chapter 3 argues that a major force of disorder and violence can be attributed to the vagabonds, bandits, and poor peasants who came to Rome to find jobs as guards in the houses of cardinals and magnates, who hired them out of fear of the troubles associated with the vacant see. Chapter 4 explains the Roman custom of seeking vengeance with the coming of the vacant see. Romans often stored pent-up desires for revenge until they could be released during the vacant see. They rarely took part in the classic vendetta of the nobility, yet followed a set of cultural scripts of revenge that used verbal insults and physical punishments to obtain and broadcast their "wild justice." Their need for vengeance stemmed from arguments in the neighborhood and marketplace among social equals. Revenge was rarely executed vertically. Thus, this chapter demonstrates that not only did law and order break down during the vacant see, but so did community consensus.

Chapters 5 and 6 continue the exploration of city-wide demonstrations of violence and disorder. Chapter 5 examines the window of opportunity that the vacant see opened to Romans in allowing them to critique the pope and protest his policies, activities normally curtailed by the living popes. This criticism took the form of handwritten invectives and letters, since the Counter-Reformation

popes prevented a printed newspaper from appearing within papal territory. The most hated popes saw riots against their name, property, and family in death. Even though these riots borrowed from the language of pillaging, they criticized the pope's heavy-handed policies rather than reflected personal ties between subjects and the pope. They were a new tradition that began with Martin V's definitive return of the papacy to Rome and the subsequent state-building efforts of his successors. By the time of Paul IV, these riots focused exclusively on the statues of the popes located on the Capitoline Hill. The pasquinades and the riots taken as a whole reveal that Romans could distinguish between what Paolo Prodi has called the pope's two souls—his dual roles as spiritual father and secular prince. On the one hand, in death they could attack his name and his symbols of power. On the other, they flocked to St Peter's to venerate his corpse. The attacks against the memory of the pope protested his failures as secular prince while leaving his sacral body intact. Finally, chapter 6 examines the conflicts surrounding the conclave. Although papal bulls supposedly prevented outside influence, several activities, including rumor, wagering on the election, and "ritual" pillages, served to immerse the city in the politicking that occurred within the conclave. The conclave and papal election created a unique public sphere, one guided by rumor, disorder, and a myriad of voices, a public sphere that was very different from Jürgen Habermas's classic bourgeois public sphere of the Enlightenment.[63] Taken together, these two chapters reveal the political agency that the vacant see accorded the people of Rome.

Criminal Sources and the Vacant See

In addition to the assortment of sources—diaries, newsletters, and decrees of the popes, governors, and civic officials—traditionally employed by historians of early modern Rome, this study, especially in Chapters 3 and 4, makes use of the rich vein of court and criminal sources found in the Archivio di Stato di Roma. The first are the trials (*processi*) and depositions (*costituti*) of

63 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass., 1989). For recent reassessments of Habermas's public sphere, see Massimo Rospocher, "Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historiographical Transition," in idem, ed., *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna, 2012), pp. 9–28; and Brendan Dooley, "News and Doubt in Early Modern Culture: Or, Are We Having a Public Sphere Yet?" in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London, 2000), pp. 275–90.

the tribunal of the governor of Rome (Tribunale del Governatore), the most powerful criminal judiciary in Rome and the surrounding countryside.[64] By established tradition, its activities were supposed to cease operating after the pope's death, but the governor continued to send his *sbirri* out and to receive reports. In a few cases, the governor's judges even conducted trials during the vacant see, but most of them date to after the papal coronation, when the tribunal fielded denunciations and complaints from victims of crimes originating between the pope's death and the election of his successor. In other cases, criminals under torture confessed to crimes that they had committed during past vacant sees. The trials and *costituti* of the governor's tribunals are long and detailed. The governor's notaries took down everything the witness or criminal said, including his or her screams and prayers while under torture. Thus, they give the voice and the attitudes of the people—with the caveat that the accused and sometimes even the witnesses faced torture, usually the *corda*, having their hands tied behind their back and being dropped from various heights. In many ways, then, the governor's tribunal operated similarly to the Inquisition trials, as its officials sought the truth primarily through denunciation and torture, both of which present problems to the modern researcher.

Another difficulty with these sources is that many of the witnesses and accused presented their version of the truth to the judges and notaries. Like early modern Frenchmen who spun tales to procure a pardon from the king, Romans typically either stretched the truth or refused to divulge the entire story in order to save themselves before the judges and notaries.[65] This does not make the trials useless, as the incidental details of the denunciations and trials often provide a great deal of information about early modern Roman society not found in other sources. Indeed, scholars have only recently used these trials to examine popular mores in early modern Rome.[66]

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64 On the tribunal and its sources, see Maria Luisa San Martini Barrovecchio, *Il Tribunale criminale del Governatore* (Rome, 1981).

65 Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 1987).

66 Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Testimonios judiciales como ego-documentos," *Cultura escrita y sociedad* 1 (2005), 58–61. On using court sources to discover popular practices and beliefs, see Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto, 1993), pp. 15–32; Thomas V. Cohen, *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 2004), pp. 1–12; and Carlo Ginzburg, "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist," in his *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1989), pp. 156–64. See also the introduction to Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer's collection of trials from the Spanish Inquisition: *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* (Baltimore, 2011), pp. 4–11.

Unfortunately, only a few trials from the governor's tribunal have survived for each vacant see. Therefore, I have also made use of the registers of the Tribunale dei Conservatori, which are filed under the records of the Tribunale del Senatore in the Archivio di Stato di Roma, which have never been systemically explored.[67] During the vacant see the conservators and the *caporioni* carried out trials and heard testimony from witnesses. The registers of the conservators' tribunal are quite fragmentary, often ending abruptly due to their state of preservation. Many of the criminal proceedings are just the nightly reports of the *caporioni* or their patrol members, while others consist of the denunciations of victims. However, a few were true trials, which included depositions from witnesses and the accused before the *caporioni* (or conservators' judges) and their notaries. On the whole, each "case" was quite small. Moreover, none from before 1623 have survived; thus, I make use of three codices that contain the registers of the vacant sees of 1623, 1644, and 1655. These tomes are organized differently: the registers for the years 1644 and 1655 are arranged in bundles called *buste*. Only about forty *buste* have survived for the vacant see of 1644, whereas that of 1655 contains several hundred, numbering almost 2000 pages. The registers for the vacant see of 1623 were not kept in *buste*.

Both sources have their advantages that complement one another. The governor's tribunal, despite containing only a handful of trials pertaining to the vacant see, provides the richest and longest trials. For their part, the records of the conservators give an immediate snapshot of the details of events as they occurred during the vacant see—while they were still fresh. Both present us with privileged insights into the violent world of ordinary Romans.

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67 On the Senator's tribunal, see Michele Di Sivo, "Il Tribunale criminale capitolino nei secoli XVI: Nota da un lavoro in corso," *Roma modenra e contemporanea* 3 (1995), 201–16.

CHAPTER 1

The Papal Hydra: The Politics of the Vacant See

"The King is dead! Long live the King!" These words habitually resounded in the ears of French subjects at the death of their king and the immediate succession of his heir in the early modern era. This ceremonial phrase developed from the efforts of jurists and royal officials in the late Middle Ages to provide political and symbolic continuity during the brief interregnum between the death of the reigning king and the coronation of his successor. The idea was to give the illusion that the *dignitas* of the king did not fall vacant, nor did the judicial structures of the realm cease functioning after his death. Royal officials first accomplished this political subterfuge with an effigy of the dead monarch that would lie in state until the coronation of his successor, but by Louis XIII's reign the French crown had adopted this phrase and the hasty presentation of the heir-apparent as the king to the people.[1]

Papal magistrates and masters of ceremonies, in contrast, responded quite differently when their master, the pope, died. Rather than perform rites that fictitiously maintained the pope's existence and the continuation of his government, papal officials visibly and ritually proclaimed the abrupt lapse of his regime and his family's power. Since the papacy was an elective monarchy, papal officials could not adopt the French rite of swiftly declaring a successor. The Catholic world but also Rome and the Papal States had to wait as the cardinals gathered in the conclave to elect the next occupant of St Peter's throne—an interval that could be as short as two weeks or as long as several months in extreme cases. However, throughout the 16th and 17th centuries the cardinals typically took about a month to select a pope.

According to a venerable tradition, codified in several bulls that culminated in Pius IV's *In eligendis* of 1562, most of the machinery of papal government came to a halt from the time of the pope's death until the coronation of his

1 On the efforts of medieval and early modern jurists and officials in grappling with the ceremonial and legal problems of interregna, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 314–450. For the development of the funeral ceremonies of the French monarchy, see Ralph Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva, 1960), pp. 177–91. For a broader context, see Paul Kléber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715* (New Haven, 1999).

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successor.[2] The offices of the Dataria and Cancelleria—important bureaucracies dealing with dispensations and papal finances, respectively—closed for the duration of the vacant see, while the criminal and civic tribunals of Rome, including the dominant court of the governor of Rome, could not open new cases. Only the financial heart of the papacy, the Apostolic Chamber, continued its activities under the guidance of the cardinal chamberlain. This prelate broke the *annulus pescatoris*, "the ring of the fisherman," used to affix the pope's seal on official documents, thereby signifying the end of his regime and the prohibition of the making of new laws during the vacant see. In this regard, the papacy shared much in common with other early modern elective monarchies, such as the Holy Roman Empire and Poland, which emphasized the sudden lapse in governmental activity with the death of the monarch.[3] In the case of the papacy, a fear existed of a family attempting to establish dynastic control over the papal crown—a fear not so farfetched when one thinks of the ambitions of the Medici and Farnese families.

With the death of the pope, Rome lost its political and charismatic center. By the 16th and 17th centuries, popes had claimed the largest share of political and ceremonial space in the city through the transformation of recalcitrant feudal lords into tamed court nobles and through the progressive weakening of the College of Cardinals and the municipal authorities on the Capitoline Hill.[4]

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2 For the bull *In eligendis*, see *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum pontificum* (Turin, 1862), 7:230–36. For a summary of the bulls regulating Rome and the Church during *sede vacante* from Nicholas II's *In nomine Domini* of 1059 to John Paul II's *Universi Dominici gregis* of 1996, see Niccolò Del Re, *La curia romana: Lineamenti storici-giuridici*, 4th ed. (Vatican City, 1998), pp. 461–94. On the evolution of these rules from the origins of the Church until Pius IV, see Spinelli, *La vacanza*. Also see Gregorio Leti, *The Ceremonies of the vacant see, Or a true relation of what passes at Rome upon the Pope's death*, trans. from the French by J. Davies of Kidwelly (London, 1671), p. 99.

3 Aleksander Gieysztor, "Gesture in the Coronation Ceremonies of Medieval Poland," in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. János M. Bak (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 153–55. Early modern Venice, although a republic, similarly played up the death of the doge, the executive head of the civic government elected for life, in order to sever the individual from the office. The critical difference with papal Rome, however, was that the Venetian patriciate and their civic officials maintained true authority while the doge lived and after his death. For an excellent discussion of ducal funeral rites, see Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 263–77.

4 See Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 17–58; Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 77–104; Delumeau, "Le progrès de la centralisation," pp. 399–410; and Peter Burke, "Sacred Rulers, Royal Priests: Rituals of the Early Modern Popes," in idem, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), pp. 168–82. See also Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*.

Without the powerful figure of the pope, Rome fell into a jurisdictional limbo characterized by competing institutional groups normally held in check by his presence. The two principal powers that claimed greater authority during the vacant see were the College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*, the city's municipal officials. Hitherto downtrodden by the living popes, they demanded a larger role in the political life of the city during the interregnum and frequently clashed with one another in the defense of their claims to dominion. But other players demanded a share of the new opportunities that arose with the coming of the vacant see. Romans from nobles to the members of the city's militia sought a role in the governance of the city that frequently led to very real battles in the streets.

The vacant see thus exacerbated preexisting political and jurisdictional tensions among the governing authorities of Rome.[5] These were tensions that lay dormant during the *sede piena* (literally the "full see," the time when the papal throne was occupied by a pope) and that could only be expressed during the jurisdictional limbo of the vacant see. The College of Cardinals, the *Popolo Romano*, and the barons of Rome all sought to assert their authority in the wake of the pope's death. More often than not they clashed, sparking verbal battles, provoking real fights in the streets, and leaving the city in a state of confusion. Since most pontifical reigns were brief in the early modern era, Rome regularly experienced the jurisdictional conflicts during the vacant see, resulting in consistent crises of state.[6] The Scottish bishop of Salisbury mocked this aspect of the vacant see in a polemic against the papacy in 1680. He rhetorically asked, "In the interval of the *sede vacante*, who is the head of the Church? Is it a dead body without a head or is it a monster of many heads?"[7]

The Pope's Relatives

The vacant see not only saw the demise of the pope and the cessation of his law, but also witnessed the abrupt decline in the influence of his house. When a cardinal assumed the title of pope, he raised his family and familiars up with him. The newly elected pope lost no time in bestowing cardinalates onto his

5 Laurie Nussdorfer, "The Politics of Space in Early Modern Rome," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42 (1997), 175–78.

6 Popes from Paul IV (r. 1555–59) to Innocent X (r. 1644–55) on average ruled for six years and eight months.

7 Gilbert Burnet, *The Infallibility of the Church of Rome examined and confuted in a letter to a Roman Priest* (London, 1680), p. 33.

relatives and allies, turning his remaining lay relatives into princes and marrying them into old feudal families, and supplying both family and clients with a myriad of sinecures.[8] The cardinal-nephew, known colloquially as the *cardinale padrone* ("the boss cardinal"), played a large role in the papal government as the secretary of state and sometimes, as in the cases of Paolo Emilio Sfondrati and Ludovico Ludovisi, dominated their infirm uncles (popes Gregory XIV and Gregory XV, respectively). At the onset of the vacant see, the loss of this power and patronage loomed over the nephews and the papal family. At best, the family would be able to maintain some influence over the conclave, enough to have a candidate less hostile to them elected as pope. At worst, it might suffer from a backlash of anger and resentment aroused by the excesses of its years of rule, as happened to both the Carafa in 1559 and the Barberini in 1644.

Many papal families went to extraordinary lengths to maintain their authority during the vacant see, going beyond involving themselves in the political maneuverings for which early modern conclaves are notorious. In 1549, during the vacant see of his grandfather, Paul III, the cardinal-nephew, Alessandro Farnese, fearing the end of his family's influence, sought the continuation of its power through the interregnum. Before the pope had died, Alessandro ordered all of the gates of Rome closed and forbade all travelers from entering or leaving the city, including the couriers of foreign dignitaries. The cardinal-nephew then established his control over Castel Sant'Angelo, the papal fortress and prison where the city's munitions and treasury were located, and placed sixty guards there, making "them swear an oath to him in front of the warden."[9] He finally had captains raise 5000 foot soldiers from the surrounding countryside for the protection of the city. Alessandro's actions angered many cardinals, who felt that he "ought not to have acted on his own account, but in the name of the Sacred College," the primary powers of the vacant see.[10]

A far greater challenge to the customary rules governing the vacant see occurred in November 1558, when Paul IV took the unprecedented step of naming his grandnephew Alfonso Carafa, the cardinal of Naples, as regent during the coming interregnum and by taking the seal of Apostolic Chamber away from the cardinal chamberlain, Guido Ascanio Sforza. Alfonso was to share control of the papal finances and head the conclave alongside Sforza during

8 Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy," pp. 329–56.

9 Dispatch of Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo of 9 November 1549 in *CSP*, ed. Rawdon Brown (1873; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1970), 5:272.

10 *CSP*, 5:272.

the vacant see.[11] Once Paul died on 18 August 1559, Sforza and Alfonso clashed over control of governance of the city and conclave.[12] Alfonso, for his part, had stationed himself with two companies of foot soldiers and fifty harquebusiers in the city with the intention of taking on his role as regent of the Holy Church during the vacant see. Meanwhile, Sforza called the cardinals into a congregation on 20 August 1559 to protest that "it was not fair to have his authority, given and confirmed by so many pontiffs, diminished without any fault on his part."[13] No doubt Sforza's anger was magnified by the fact he had purchased the office of chamberlain from Paul III in 1537. The cardinals debated the issue and decided to prohibit Alfonso from having any administrative power in "matters concerning the vacant see" and to keep the chamberlain in his jurisdiction, "as was the ancient custom."[14] During the debate among the cardinals, members of the *Popolo Romano* and several nobles from distinguished Roman families appeared at the congregation to demonstrate their support of the chamberlain. Faced with such opposition, further aggravated by the popular discontent with the Carafa, Alfonso prudently respected the Sacred College's decision.

Both episodes show that the laws of the vacant see, although established by tradition and inscribed in papal bulls, were not always written in stone. Papal families manoeuvred to find ways to subvert these laws in their favor and, in the case of the Carafa, sought to change these rules. The desire to retain a hold on the power to which these families had grown accustomed motivated the actions of the nephews and popes. But fear played no less of a role in their actions, as many papal families suffered major repercussions for their years of misrule. Members of both the Carafa and the Barberini families were exiled after the death of their papal leader.[15]

Most families of the deceased popes preferred to work with the College of Cardinals rather than fight against its authority. In most cases, the Sacred College accorded them a small role during the vacant see through the bestowal

11 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fols. 162v–163r; BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 19 August 1559, fol. 71r–v; ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli, 21 August 1559, fol. 662r–v; and *Lettres et mémoires d'estat, des roys, princes, ambassedeurs et autres ministres, sous les règnes de François I, Henry II & Henry III*, ed. Guillaume Ribier (Blois, 1666), letter of Philibert Babou d'Angoulême to Cardinal Guise of Lorraine, 18 August 1559, 2:828–29.

12 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 162v.

13 ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli, fol. 662v.

14 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 19 August 1559, fol. 71v.

15 For the Carafa, see Miles Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rom*e (Oxford, 2013). For the Barberini, see Giacinto Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, ed. Manlio Barberito (Rome, 1994), 2:462–63.

of minor offices that were tantamount to sinecures. Since the second half of the 16th century, popes had granted the office of castellan of Castel Sant'Angelo to a lay relative, typically a brother or nephew, with the duty of guarding the papal treasury and prisons both in normal times and during the vacant see. The title was really a sinecure, since a vice castellan with military experience took care of the quotidian duties that the position warranted. The College of Cardinals always confirmed the pope's relative in this position after his death.[16]

A far more important position that cardinals entrusted to the lay nephew of the deceased pope was the general of the Holy Church, which entailed recruiting soldiers from the Roman countryside and Umbria to watch the city and the conclave as well as monitoring their behavior during their stay in Rome. The cardinals voted on whom to confer this office upon in the first meeting of the Sacred College. Usually the lay nephew of the deceased pope had no trouble getting elected, easily winning the votes of the majority of the cardinals. However, personal animosities occasionally surfaced. Taddeo Barberini, for example, feeling the general hatred toward his family after Urban VIII's death in 1644, only succeeded to the generalship after a heated debate among the cardinals. Many of the cardinals still held a grudge against Taddeo for his holding the honorific title of prefect of Rome. The title had belonged to the Della Rovere dukes of Urbino until the dynasty's extinction in 1631. Urban VIII, in an effort to add luster to his family's name, bestowed the position upon his nephew. This angered many of the nobles and ambassadors in Rome, who refused to acknowledge Taddeo's possession of it.[17] The Cardinals de' Medici and Este vigorously opposed the Barberini upstart's investiture as general, but in the end he garnered enough votes to win the office. Nevertheless, the Sacred College ordered him "to keep a simple name," a reference to his title of prefect of Rome.[18]

The general of the Holy Church, like the castellan, was largely an honorific title, especially since many of its holders came from families lacking military and noble backgrounds, such as the Borghese, Barberini, and Pamphili. The

16 Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *Le Château Saint-Ange* (Paris, 1909), pp. 186–98.

17 Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, p. 37. For the controversy over the office of prefect of Rome, see John M. Hunt, "Carriages, Violence and Masculinity in Early Modern Rome," *I Tatti: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014), 189–92.

18 For the opposition of de' Medici and Este, see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 121, dispatch of Cardinal Federico Cornaro of 30 July 1644, fols. 45v–46r. Cornaro represented the Venetian government as an extraordinary ambassador in place of the regular ambassador during Urban VIII's vacant see. For the quote, see BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma notato da Deone hora temi Dio," fol. 106r.

general possessed no legal authority during the vacant see but could issue *bandi*, or decrees, stamped with the arms of the vacant see, the crossed keys surmounted by a canopy, that regulated the soldiers stationed at the conclave and the city walls.[19] Only three of these *bandi* have survived for the vacant sees of 1592, 1623, and 1644, and they were primarily concerned with the discipline of soldiers. For example, they prohibited gaming in the barracks and admonished soldiers not to accost travelers or steal from the nearby vineyards as they watched over the city gates.[20]

Since the general often lacked military experience, the Sacred College normally elected a lieutenant from the ranks of the Roman Barons. Prized for their military expertise throughout Europe, these feudal nobles did the actual work of recruiting and regulating the soldiers required for the city's and the conclave's protection.[21] After Sixtus V's death in 1590, for example, the College of Cardinals elected his nephew Michele Peretti, a youth of "tender age," as the general, but charged Honorato Caetani, a noble Roman with much battlefield experience, with the actual task of regulating the soldiers.[22] Throughout Sixtus's vacant see, the cardinals relayed orders exclusively to Caetani, thoroughly bypassing Peretti.[23]

Other times, the cardinals allowed the general to choose his own lieutenant, as did Alessandro de' Medici during Leo XI's vacant see in 1605, under the stipulation that "he must be a Roman"—meaning he must be a noble from the feudal families that had dominated the Roman countryside. De' Medici selected another member of the Caetani family as his lieutenant.[24] However, the cardinals generally sought to keep the ability of selecting and overseeing the lieutenant as their prerogative. In a congregation that met during Urban VIII's vacant see in 1644, the cardinals stipulated that they had the authority "to order the Signor General of the Holy Church [to do] all that is necessary for the security of all that come to the conclave" and that the general should be "totally

19 Besides the general of the Holy Church, only the cardinal chamberlain, the governor of Rome, and the governor of the Borgo, whose jurisdiction encompassed the neighborhood surrounding the Vatican, could issue *bandi* bearing these arms.

20 ASR, Bandi, vol. 8, *bando* of Cesare Facchinetti, [no day given] January 1592; ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 73, *bando* of Honorato Ludovisi, 13 July 1623, fol. 296r; and t. 74, *bando* of Taddeo Barberini, 3 August 1644, p. 346.

21 Gregory Hanlon, *The Twilight of a Military Tradition: Italian Aristocrats and European Conflicts, 1560–1800* (New York, 1998), pp. 227–28.

22 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 441v. The Caetani were the dukes of the small fiefdom of Sermoneta.

23 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 467r.

24 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of 4 May 1605, fol. 7r.

dependent" on them.[25] Thus, the cardinals saw the former papal family as a threat to the authority it had gained during the vacant see. Nevertheless, the papal nephews still held onto the military office of general of the Holy Church until Innocent XII's bull *Romanum decet Pontificem* (1692), which effectively abolished nepotism within the Church.[26]

The College of Cardinals

The foremost power of the vacant see, stipulated by written constitutions since Nicholas II's *In nomine Domini* (1059), was the College of Cardinals. At one time, the cardinals wielded real power as advisors to the pope and shapers of policy. During the Great Schism they challenged the papacy with the idea of a permanent council that would check the power of the pope. But with the end of the Great Schism and the permanent return of the papacy to Rome under Martin V in 1420, the cardinals as a group saw their influence steadily wane throughout the 15th century as papal authority waxed. By the late 16th and 17th centuries, the cardinals had been relegated to mere administrative and ceremonial roles within the church bureaucracy.[27] The vacant see, however, opened new horizons for the cardinals. First, it allowed them to exercise their one source of true power with the papacy: the ability to elect the next pope. Second, it allowed them to regulate Rome and the Papal States in the absence of their lord. Nonetheless, popes, ever fearful of the liberties that the cardinals took during the vacant see, established severe limitations on the college's ability to act through bulls. These culminated in the early modern period with Pius IV's

25 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 121, dispatch of Cardinal Federico Cornaro of 6 August 1644, fol. 51r–v.

26 Ippolito, *Il tramonto*, pp. 112–16 (especially p. 113 for the generalship of the Holy Church). Innocent's vacant see of 1700 was the first time the lay nephew of the pope did not hold the position of general. The amateur historian Francesco Valesio left this account in his diary: "on account of the abolition of nepotism, it was prohibited to create generals of the Holy Church." See his *Diario di Roma*, ed. Gaetana Scano (Milan, 1977), 1:62.

27 The gradual weakening of the College of Cardinals coincided with both its Italianization and its steady augmentation from twenty-four members at the time of the Council of Trent to seventy during the pontificate of Sixtus V (1585–90). This transformation had the effect of making the college more dependent on the papacy, as each pope filled its ranks with Italian members indebted to him for their rise to the purple. See Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:291; Barbara McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals, Reform, and the Church as Property* (Berkeley, 1985); Hay, *The Church in Italy*, pp. 37–40; and Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 82–86.

In eligendis.[28] This bull defined the authority of the College of Cardinals solely in administrative terms. The college could provide for the defense and provisioning of Rome and the Papal States, but it could not exercise any permanent legislative or judicial powers in both religious and temporal affairs.

The cardinal chamberlain and the *capi degli ordini* (the three deans of the orders of deacons, priests, and bishops) assumed leadership of the cardinals at this time. Consequently, they led the college's congregations that met both before and after they had entered the conclave. The *capi degli ordini* normally fulfilled ceremonial roles while the pope lived. The cardinal chamberlain, however, who as head of the Apostolic Chamber already held tremendous authority over the papacy's economic policy, saw his power magnified considerably as he assumed the leadership of the college until the election of a new pope.[29] The benefits of this lifelong office, especially during the vacant see, can be seen in reigning popes' efforts to secure it for their families: Clement VIII bought the office for Pietro Aldobrandini, in 1599, and Urban VIII procured it for Antonio Barberini in 1638. The acquisition of the offices by both popes' nephews stirred up controversy in the Curia.[30]

Although the cardinals voted on all major decisions that the Sacred College undertook, the chamberlain had the ability to act alone in matters of urgency and, along with the *capi degli ordini*, could issue *bandi* that regulated Rome during the vacant see. A reflection of his authority was his use, together with the governors of Rome and the Borgo and the general of the Holy Church, of the arms of the vacant see on his *bandi*. This was a *padiglione*, or canopy, that covered the crossed keys of the papacy. The *padiglione* represented the lapse of papal authority and the temporary leadership of the chamberlain, who of all of officials of the interregnum had the right to employ it in conjunction with his personal insignia. The chamberlain also minted real coins with the *padiglione* on one side and his arms on the other that would be used for the

28 Spinelli, *La vacanza*, pp. 229–45.

29 On the cardinal chamberlain and *capi degli ordini*, see Del Re, *La curia romana*, pp. 285–97; and Giovanni Battista De Luca, *Il dottor volgare ovvero il compendio di tutta la legge civile, canonica, feudale e municipale* (1673; repr. Florence, 1839–43), pp. 503–04. For the chamberlain and his authority while the pope lived, see Maria Grazia Pastura Ruggiero, *La reverenda camera apostolica e i suoi archivi* (Rome, 1984), pp. 63–75.

30 Pietro Aldobrandini held this position until his death in 1621. Antonio Barberini enjoyed the office for the long tenure of thirty-three years (1638–71). On the purchase of their offices, see Pastura Ruggiero, *La reverenda camera apostolica*, p. 66; and Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, p. 46. In the early 1630s, curialists valued the office at 50,000–70,000 *scudi*; see Fausta Piola Caselli, "Aspetti del debito pubblico nello Stato pontificio: Gli uffici vacabili," *Annali della facoltà di scienze politiche dell'Università degli studi di Perugia* 1 (1970), 55–56.

duration of the interregnum. In addition, he sometimes issued commemorative medallions bearing both emblems; from the vacant see of Urban VIII onward these medallions were used as permits to allow servants and ambassadors entry into the conclave.[31]

Immediately after the death of the pope, the chamberlain and the *capi degli ordini*, sometimes in union with the cardinal-nephew, summoned the cardinals present in Rome to the first congregation in the sacristy of St Peter's. At this consistory they planned the nine days of funeral rites—the *Novendiales* that preceded the opening of the conclave—and made the necessary arrangements for the regulation of Rome and the provinces. One of the first tasks to occupy the cardinals was the nomination of officials, who provided law and order to Rome. We have already seen their rationale in choosing the general of the Holy Church. They also chose an ecclesiastic to replace the lay governor of the Borgo, a relative of the deceased pope who policed the autonomous area around the Vatican.[32] For the duration of the vacant see, the new governor of the Borgo watched over the conclave and this neighborhood. The governor commanded the Swiss guards stationed at the conclave and had control over Castel Sant'Angelo, taking over the position of castellan of the papal fortress that was held by the lay nephew of the dead pope. In this capacity he watched over the papal treasury, prisons, and munitions. To help him regulate the Borgo and the conclave, he had the ability to issue *bandi* in his own name, which lacked power outside his jurisdiction.[33] In 1586, jurisdiction became even more complicated after Sixtus V annexed the Borgo to Rome, thus making it a *rione*, or district of the city. Civic officials now patrolled the Borgo alongside the governor's men during the vacant see.

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31 For images of coins produced for 17th-century vacant sees, see Edoardo Martinori, *Annali della Zecca di Roma* (Rome, 1919), fasc. 15, p. 4, for the vacant see of Paul V, and pp. 17–19 for that of Gregory XV; fasc. 16, pp. 1–4, for the vacant see of Urban VIII, and pp. 49–52 for Innocent X. For the medallions minted by the chamberlain, see Gianluigi Boccia, *La sede vacante e le sue medaglie: Conclavi e partecipanti del 1549 al 1978* (Rome, 2003).

32 Niccolò Del Re, "Il governatore di Borgo," *Studi romani* 11 (1963), 13–14 and 20. The lay office of governor of the Borgo was created in 1555 by Julius III and was abolished by Clement IX in 1667. The ecclesiastic office of governor of the Borgo was created during the vacant see of Paul III in 1549 and was abolished by Clement X in 1732. The governor of the Borgo was also known as the legate of the conclave.

33 The *bandi* issued by the governor of the Borgo centered primarily on the conclave: punishing those who attempted to disrupt the election and disciplining unruly soldiers; see ASV, Arm. Misc. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 28 April 1605, p. 224; *bando* of 21 February 1621, p. 225; *bando* of 31 July 1644, p. 226; and *bando* of 9 January 1655, p. 227.

The cardinals also voted on the confirmation of the current governor of Rome. The governor of Rome was the most powerful judicial authority in the city while the pope lived. His jurisdiction in criminal matters extended well beyond Rome and even reached subject cities. Since its formation in the 15th century, the office of governor of Rome grew with the march of papal absolutism, so that by the end of the 16th century it had marginalized the numerous smaller tribunals that dotted the judicial landscape of Rome.[34] He was the only judge who had the power to speak in the living pope's name.[35] With his master dead, his position changed dramatically. His tribunal shut down; he could not hear any new cases, and his squad of constables quit patrolling the streets because tradition since the 14th century had accorded that responsibility to Rome's civic militia instead. Nonetheless, he remained the eyes and ears of the cardinals ensconced in the conclave, reporting to them through letters on the crimes and tumults that occurred in the streets and squares.[36]

Typically a bishop with a thorough training in law, the governor also served as the voice of the Sacred College. After the death of each pope the governor, under the command of the chamberlain and *capi degli ordini*, proclaimed a general *bando* posted at the entrances into the city, outside all of its inns, and in the central market of Campo dei Fiori that provided for peace and quiet for the duration of the vacant see.[37] This *bando* did a number of things. It reaffirmed all *bandi* already in effect that the governor had published before the vacant see, but now under the aegis of the Sacred College rather than the deceased pope. It also revoked all licenses to carry weapons issued by all powers in Rome, whether issued by the conservators or by any of the heads of the Curia's various departments, including those of the chamberlain. Only soldiers recruited by the general of the Holy Church, the artisans of the civic militia, and guards licensed to watch the palaces of cardinals and other magnates were allowed to carry weapons. These soldiers were given new licenses that expired

34 Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*, pp. 11–12 and 39–44; Irene Fosi, *La giustizia del papa: Sudditi e tribunali nello Stato Pontificio in età moderna* (Rome, 2007), pp. 23–29; Niccolò Del Re, *Il Monsignor Governatore* (Rome, 1962), p. 11; Di Sivo, "Roman Criminal Justice," pp. 282–84; and Miles Pattenden, "Governor and Government in Sixteenth-Century Rome," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 77 (2009), 257–72.

35 De Luca, *Il dottor volgare*, pp. 587–88.

36 Only the letters of the Governor Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino from the vacant see of Urban VIII (1644) have survived, see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fols. 479r–683r.

37 Like the chamberlain, general of the Holy Church, and governor of the Borgo, the governor affixed the *padiglione* seal on the *bandi* he issued during the vacant see. The general *bandi* were entitled "Bando concernente il governo di Roma durante il Sede Vacante."

at the end of the vacant see.[38] Even the conservators had to seek approval from the cardinals and governor in order to arm the militia—no doubt a humbling experience for the heirs of the Roman Republic.

The general *bando* forbade a variety of activities that were normally illegal during the *sede piena*. These included prohibitions against gambling, street fighting, and carrying short and thus easily disguised weapons, such as daggers and handguns. Some of the points of the *bando* centered on the type of activities that only occurred during the vacant see, such as disturbing the conclave, betting on the papal election, and keeping an excessive number of guards at one's home. The governor could also issue ad hoc *bandi* according to the needs of the vacant see. These typically concerned the carrying of illicit weapons, always a problem during the vacant see when armed men inundated Rome, looking for employment as palace guards or as soldiers for the conclave.[39]

In theory, the governor's tribunal ceased functioning for the duration of the vacant see. In practice, the governor sometimes sent his *sbirri* out to patrol the city and even practiced summary justice.[40] In most cases, the governor waited until the election of a new pope before trying criminals that had been arrested during the vacant see. Sometimes he meted out punishments for serious offenses to make an example for the population. During Gregory XIV's vacant see of 1591 the governor's men went about the city, confiscating illegal daggers and guns from soldiers and administering the *strappado* on the offenders immediately in public view, despite the dangers of doing so in such a volatile time.[41] With the approval of the College of Cardinals the governor also administered the death penalty. Two weeks after Sixtus V's death in 1590, the governor Girolamo Matteucci had the son of a cloth merchant hanged for attempting to shoot a *caporione*, one of the leaders of Rome's neighborhood militia.[42] Likewise, in March 1605, after Clement VIII's death, the governor had

38 Upon the election of the new pope, the governor issued a *bando* that revoked all licenses issued during the vacant see and that compelled all soldiers recruited to guard the city and the palaces of potentates to leave the city. ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 13 December 1565, p. 210; *bando* of 28 August 1590, p. 211; *bando* of 5 March 1605, p. 212; *bando* of 30 January 1621, p. 213r; *bando* of 9 July 1623, p. 214; *bando* of 31 July 1644, p. 215; and *bando* of 9 January 1655, p. 217.

39 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 19 August 1644, p. 251; and t. 48, *bando* of 9 December 1590, p. 266.

40 On the activity of the governor's *sbirri* during the vacant see and the controversy this provoked, see below in this chapter.

41 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 23 October 1591, fol. 311r.

42 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 15 September 1590, fol. 473r. A year later, during the vacant see of Gregory XIV, a soldier of the Grand Duke of Tuscany was hanged for carrying a

drawn and quartered two bandits who had robbed several grain merchants in the Roman countryside.[43]

Since the governor enjoyed a great deal of authority during the vacant see, his confirmation remained an important decision of the cardinals. Generally, they retained the governor of the deceased pope until his successor could select a permanent replacement. Two examples, however, exist of governors who had a much different experience. In 1585, the governor of Gregory XIII, Francesco Sangiorgio, narrowly missed receiving confirmation from the Sacred College. The politicking of Cardinal Giovanni Vincenzo Gonzaga on his behalf ensured he kept his position, but the Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Priuli wrote that his election succeeded "with few votes and with the dissatisfaction of the city."[44] Sangiorgio, known for his severity, not only angered the cardinals but all of Rome and "was little loved by this people."[45] According to Priuli, the cardinals, "in order to better insure the authority and reputation of the governor," had Paolo Giordano Orsini accompany the governor with the conservators to the Capitol, where the popular baron used "loving words to quiet the city."[46]

Giacomo Francesco Arimberti, the governor of Rome under Innocent X, had even less success than Sangiorgio. The Sacred College rejected his confirmation in 1655. Arimberti was the first and only governor to experience this indignity. The cardinals made this decision, according to the Venetian ambassador Niccolò Sagredo, due to his poor conduct while in office. The *caporione* Giacinto Gigli was more specific. He complained just before Innocent X had died that Arimberti

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small handgun with a dagger attached to its end. See BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 26 October 1591, fol. 343r.

43 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 26 March 1605, fol. 145v. For a later example, see the letters of the governor of Rome, Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, to the Sacred College of 2 and 9 September 1644, in which he notified the cardinals he had executed two criminals, a bandit, and a counterfeiter in Piazza di Ponte; ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fols. 560r and 569r.

44 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 19, dispatch of 12 April 1585, fol. 99r. An *avviso* of 13 April noted that many of the cardinals did not want Sangiorgio's confirmation: BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, fol. 171r.

45 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 19, dispatch of 20 April 1585, fol. 119r.

46 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 19, dispatch of 20 April 1585, fol. 119r.

> always used a certain severity and harshness without regard to the quality of the person, both against nobles and their families and against the subjects of the Roman Barons in the castles around Rome . . . And also in Rome he jailed anyone that he found at the night carrying unlicensed and forbidden weapons . . . regardless if was a familiar of a cardinal or prince. For this, he stirred up the hatred of all against himself.[47]

Once the cardinals had made their decision, they had the masters of ceremonies inform Arimberti of his demotion. In order to show the court and the city that Arimberti had been replaced, the master of ceremonies then removed the insignia of the office of governor from his carriage and placed them on the carriage of the new governor, Giulio Rospigliosi.[48]

In both cases the cardinals, responding to the discontent with papal officials, used the opportunity of the vacant see to assert themselves and to repeal a pope's decision. These were not isolated cases. They also addressed liberties that living popes had curtailed. After the death of Paul IV in 1559, the cardinals freed several prelates, including Cardinal Giovanni Morone, whom the Carafa pope had imprisoned on trumped-up charges of heresy.[49] In the first congregation of the Sacred College on January 1655, the cardinals voted to restore Bernardo Savelli to his office of guardian of the Conclave, which Innocent X had abolished in 1652.[50] Some of these acts might have had the spirit of revenge

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47 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:720. Gigli noted that even before Innocent X had died, Arimberti, fearing repercussions for his severity, had sought safety in the Chiesa del Giesù.

48 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:730. Arimberti responded to this unprecedented dismissal by storming back to his home in central Rome. On his way, he encountered some armed men in Piazza Scossacavalli, who, inspired by the license of the vacant see, began to mock him. He told them "they needed to have a license to carry prohibited weapons and lanterns and as he left them, he let a great fart, ridiculing them," (730–31). Besides the indignity of being the first governor not to be confirmed by the cardinals, Arimberti lost an important position that could have served as a stepping stone to a cardinal's hat and even the papacy. His successor Rospigliosi became Pope Clement IX in 1667. For more on this event, see Hunt, "Carriages, Violence, and Masculinity," pp. 181–82.

49 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 26 August 1559, fols. 74v–75r. Alessandro Pallantieri, a fiscal procurator jailed for malfeasance, was also freed by the cardinals. During the vacant see of Sixtus V, the cardinals freed a Captain Perugino, likewise accused of heresy; see Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 2 September 1590, fol. 462r.

50 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:731. The guardian of the conclave was also known as the marshal of the Holy Roman Church, an office that the Savelli family had held since the 15th century. At first the marshal served as a military commander, but by the 16th century he had become the protector of the conclave. The marshal also had a tribunal called the Curia Savella with its own prison located near the Campo dei Fiori. In 1652, Innocent X permanently abolished the Savellis' tribunal and closed their prisons in order to increase the authority

guiding them. The cardinal chamberlain, Antonio Barberini, whose family had suffered exile during much of Innocent X's pontificate, issued an edict allowing the itinerant vendors to return to Piazza Navona. Innocent had forbidden them from selling their wares in the square, in order to construct the Fountain of the Four Rivers.[51] Thus, although bound by bulls not to make innovations in papal governance, the cardinals often took the opportunity of the vacant see to redress the wrongs of the pontificate of the deceased pope.

The *Popolo Romano*

Rivaling the College of Cardinals was the city's communal government, the other major power of the vacant see. Its officials met at the Capitoline Hill on the site formerly occupied by the Roman Republic's religious and civic center. This civic government, known collectively as the *Popolo Romano* and dating back to the 12th century, was composed of a senator, three conservators, fourteen *caporioni*, and gentlemen and nobles eligible to attend its general councils.[52] Like all independent institutions in early modern Rome, the *Popolo Romano* faced growing marginalization with the papacy's return from Avignon. By the 16th century it had lost many of its traditional privileges and saw its freedom of action hampered by the absolutist papal government. After each papal election in this period, the *Popolo Romano* sent a series of petitions, or *grazie*, to the new pope asking him to restore liberties and privileges curtailed by the predecessor. Originally characterized by a defiant tone, by the late 16th century the *grazie* had become more submissive, since popes had more often than not refused to reinstate them.[53] In particular, the magistrates sought to defend their court, the Tribunal of the Senator, from the progressive usurpation of its jurisdiction over criminal and civil matters by the Tribunal of the Governor.[54] Despite failing to stop these papal incursions, Rome's communal government continued to exist until the 19th century.

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of the governor's tribunal and to build a larger prison, the Carceri Nuove, on via Giulia. On the marshal, see Niccolò Del Re, *Il maresciallo di Santa Romana Chiesa, Custode del conclave* (Rome, 1962).

51 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:733; and Francesco Cancellieri, *Il mercato, il lago dell'acqua vergine, ed il palazzo panfiliano nel circo Agonale detto volgarmente Piazza Navona* (Rome, 1811), p. 116. Alexander VII repealed Barberini's edict on 21 October 1655.

52 Brentano, *Rome before Avignon*, pp. 93–98; and Del Re, *La curia capitolina*, pp. 13–25. The term *Popolo Romano* was derived from the S.P.Q.R. of the Roman Republic.

53 Rodocanachi, *Les institutions communales de Rome sous la papauté* (Paris, 1901), pp. 211, 263, and 320; and Pio Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento* (Bologna, 1948), pp. 215–46.

54 Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*, p. 14; and Di Sivo, "Roman Criminal Justice," pp. 282–84.

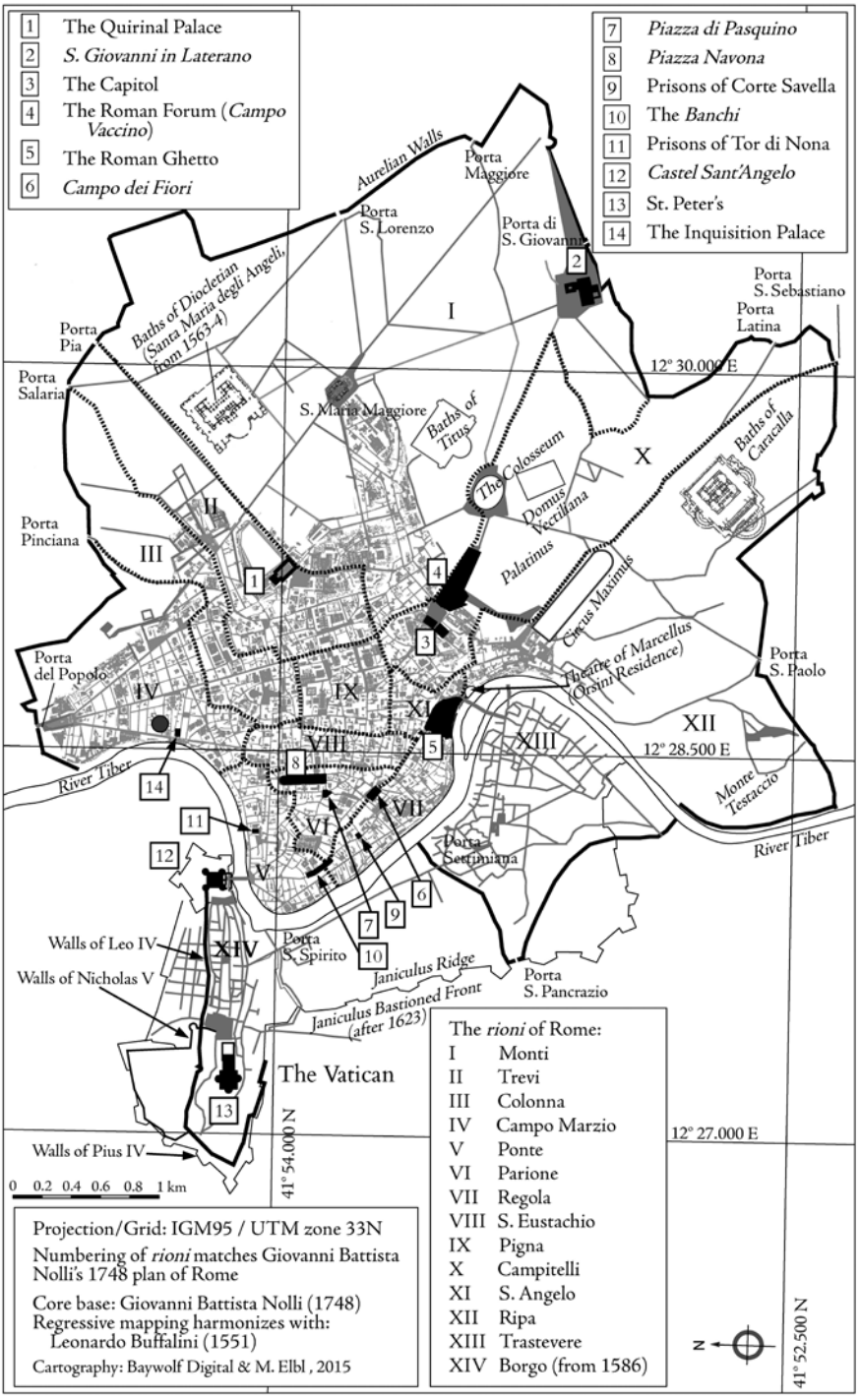

ILLUSTRATION 2 *City map of Rome.*

As with many municipal governments of the early modern era, the *Popolo Romano* was dominated by a small oligarchy of elites composed of old Roman families and new men who had grown wealthy from trade and rents. In contrast to most Italian cities, Rome accorded a place in its communal regime for wealthy foreigners, who were eligible for office after five years of residence in the city. For example, the Sienese Borghese and the Umbrian Pamphili families held high positions within the *Popolo Romano* after becoming thoroughly Romanized.[55] Nevertheless, only a small number of Romans enjoyed the right to take part in its government. Laurie Nussdorfer estimates that in Urban VIII's day, around 500 to 600 men out of a population of 115,00 monopolized the city's political offices, particularly those of the conservators and *caporioni*.[56]

This group of nobles and patricians had once stood out as a volatile element in the Roman population, having staged two rebellions against the popes in the 15th century. However, by the early modern period it had resigned itself to papal leadership and had to petition each pope for the renewal of its rights and privileges. The vacant see thus presented the magistrates with a coveted opportunity to exercise real dominion in the city. In contrast to the cardinals, whose activities during the vacant see were defined by papal bulls, the civic magistrates lacked a written constitution outlining their interregnal powers and privileges until the mid-18th century.[57] Instead, the *Popolo Romano* based its authority in the vacant see on a tradition whose origins are difficult to establish, but which had long been recognized from the 15th century onward.

As soon as the Capitol's Patara bell tolled, signaling the death of the pope, the *Popolo Romano* began to exercise its newfound authority. To signify this change, the Senator of Rome—the chief judge of the Capitoline court and ceremonial head of the *Popolo Romano* chosen by the pope—assumed during the *sede piena* a more reduced role in its administration than that to which he was accustomed.[58] The senator stepped down from his position as

55 Ferraro, "The Nobility of Rome," pp. 45–46 and 99–100; and Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy."

56 Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, p. 67. All positions in the civic government were held for three months so that in any given year there would be twelve conservators and fifty-six *caporioni*.

57 ASC, Cred. XIV, vol. 148 (anno 1758), "Giuridizione del Camerlengo del P.R. in Sede Vacante," and ASC, Cred. XVI, vol. 27 (n.d. dopo 1767), "Trattato di Giuridizione de signori Conservatori in Sede Vacante."

58 Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, p. 338. The Senator of Rome was similar in many ways to *podestà* of the medieval communes. Like the *podestà*, he was a foreign knight with legal training who was to be an impartial judge and stand above factional rivalries. He generally came from a city subject to the papacy. See Del Re, *La curia capitolina*, pp. 13–20; and Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 69–70.

judge and allowed the conservators to take up the task of meting out justice while he stayed in his palace on the Capitoline Hill with a squad of soldiers.[59] Occasionally, due to the dramatic increase in violence during the vacant see, the conservators allowed the senator to hear criminal and civil cases as long as he kept them informed of the fines and punishments he administered.[60]

The true locus of power at the Capitol could be found in the Palace of Conservators, where the civic magistrates and those eligible for office gathered in a general council after the pope's death. In this general council the members of the *Popolo Romano* elected by lot forty deputies who would help in the decision making and defense of the city. These deputies always came from the ranks of the patriciate.[61] After electing the noble deputies, the general council disbanded, never to meet again during the interregnum unless in extraordinary circumstances. The group of forty deputies as well as the three conservators and fourteen *caporioni* served as the core of the communal government for the rest of the vacant see. They met in secret councils called congregations, where they proclaimed decrees and issued directives concerning the maintenance of the peace. The magnified importance of holding these offices during the vacant see sometimes led to quarrels among the *Popolo Romano*. For example, outgoing officials refused to cede their seats to their newly elected replacements when the *Popolo Romano* gathered in the general council at the false news of Gregory XIV's death on 2 October 1591.[62] Similarly, the *caporione* of the neighborhood district of Sant'Eustachio refused to give up his position to the newly elected Rutilio Puro at the start of Clement VIII's vacant see in 1605.[63] So coveted were these communal offices that Gigli related that on the morning of Innocent X's death in 1655 the general council elected fifty gentlemen deputies instead of the usual forty in order to placate the patriciate's desire to hold power during the interregnum.[64]

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59 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 10 May 1555, fol. 39r; 21 August 1559, fol. 48v; and 8 May 1572, fol. 122r.

60 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 17 October 1591, fols. 217v–218r; 7 March 1605, fol. 246r; and 23 July 1623, fol. 286r. The conservators accorded the senator a lieutenant to help judge the numerous acts of violence committed during the vacant see of Gregory XV in 1623 (f. 286v). The senator could administer punishments up to the death penalty during the vacant see, as he had one Virgilio di Capranica hanged in the main square of the Capitol for killing a locksmith: ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 5 October 1590, fol. 183r.

61 Notaries drew up lists of these deputies at the general council. Surnames from old Roman families, such as the Frangipani, the Mattei, and the Muti, appear frequently in these lists.

62 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 2 October 1591, fol. 289v. Gregory died two weeks later on 16 October. The *Popolo Romano* had just elected its new officials when the false news of the pope's death spread throughout the city.

63 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, fol. 245r.

64 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:731.

ILLUSTRATION 3 *"Caporione che co' molta gente armata và girando la notte p custodia della città"; detail from* Nuova et essatta pianta del conclave con le funtioni e ceremonie per l'elettione del nuovo pontefice fatto nella sede vacante di Papa Clemente IX, *by Giovanni Battista Falda* (*Rome, 1670*) IMAGE CREDIT FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

At the secret councils, the magistrates decided on edicts that the conservators later proclaimed under their own name. These edicts, like those of governor, provided for the peace and order during the vacant see. Hence they, too, prohibited a number of activities: the carrying of daggers, handguns, and other small weapons; going about in disguises; disturbing Jews both inside and outside of the Ghetto; gambling; and prostitutes riding in carriages.[65] Other

65 For smaller, easily concealed weapons; see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 9 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 11 January 1655, n. p. For disguises;

edicts ordered innkeepers to maintain a ledger of their guests and ordered residents to keep a lighted candle at one of their windows at night to forestall crime.[66] A concern for security prompted these edicts, but the conservators were eager to emphasize their jurisdictional authority over the Sacred College, which often led to quarrels with the cardinals.[67]

When not leading the secret councils, the three conservators occupied themselves with different duties. One of the conservators rode daily through Rome in a cavalcade of two hundred men that consisted of *caporioni*, gentlemen, and guards "in order to keep the city in peace and fear."[68] Meanwhile, another conservator stood guard at the conclave with eight soldiers—a face-saving custom, since this force was much smaller than the squad of Swiss guards of the governor of the Borgo and the company of soldiers under Duke Savelli that watched over the cardinals.[69] The last conservator remained at the Palace of the Conservators with a troop of fifty soldiers. There he heard the reports of the

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see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 10 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 11 January 1655, n. p. For disturbing the Jews, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 10 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 9 January 1655, n. p. For gambling, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 10 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 11 January 1655, n. p. In the 16th century, the secret councils had proclaimed decrees against gambling, but these have not survived: ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, fol. 83v, decree of 18 October 1559; fol. 94v, decrees of 17 December 1565; fol. 122r–v, decree of 8 May 1572; fol. 182r, decree of 29 September 1590; fol. 192r–v, decree of 3 October 1590; and fol. 233r, decree of 2 January 1592. For prostitutes in carriages, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 10 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 29 July, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 11 January 1655, n. p. Earlier decrees exist against prostitutes going about in carriages, but they have not survived: ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, fol. 83v, decree of 18 October 1559; and fol. 122v, decree of 8 May 1572.

66 For keeping lights at the windows, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 11 January 1655, n. p. For the keeping of ledgers of guests, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 18, edict of 29 July 1644, n. p.

67 Nussdorfer expresses this idea in *Civic Politics*, pp. 240–43.

68 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 12 April 1585, fol. 144v. This was a traditional duty of the conservators. A Capitoline notary wrote during the vacant see of Clement VIII that the conservator "rode through the city with a retinue of gentlemen and guards as was custom for the terror of the plebe," ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 12 March 1605, fol. 247r. See also ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 29 October 1591, fol. 266v: wherein a notary reported that the noble magistrates and soldiers rode through Rome "with the Monsignor Governor of Rome to maintain the calm and fear of the people." And an *avviso* of 1623 noted that the conservators had resolved "to go through the city often with the end of keeping it in greater calm," ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 29 July 1623, fol. 206r.

69 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 8 May 1572, fol. 121r.

caporioni related to the daily patrols of the artisan militia and judged criminal cases resulting from their activities.[70]

The primary responsibility of the *Popolo Romano* was the maintenance of order in the streets and neighborhoods during the heightened period of violence and license that the pope's death produced. The artisan militia, composed of 320 men from the 14 *rioni* (neighborhood districts), handled this task. Normally playing a ceremonial role in the civic processions of Rome, the *Popolo Romano* only activated the militia in times of crisis that included war, plague, and the vacant see. Each *rione* contributed twenty to thirty artisans and shopkeepers to serve as constables in its patrol. The more populous districts in the city center, such as Trastevere and Ponte, enlisted a greater share of their men.[71] A master craftsman called a *capotoro*, or sometimes *capostrada*, led each patrol in the name of the *caporione*, who were required to attend the meetings of the secret councils.[72] However, from the extant reports written up by the *caporioni*, it is clear that many of them occasionally patrolled the streets with their men.

Each *caporione* used his home as a headquarters for his company and as the seat of an impromptu court where he tried criminal cases that originated in his *rione*. At the sounding of the Patara bell, a *caporione* would summon his men to duty by processing through the neighborhood with a drummer and the *rione's* standard. Once he had collected all of his constables, the *caporione* marched with his company to the Capitoline Hill, where he would then attend the general council of the *Popolo Romano*. Before they went to the Capitol, the *caporioni* of Ponte, Sant'Angelo, and Campitelli took their men to the prisons located in their districts to free the jailed debtors.[73] After this procession, the

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70 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 10 May 1555, fol. 38v; 21 August 1559, fol. 48v; 27 August 1559, fol. 54r; and 8 May 1572, fol. 121v.

71 Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, p. 72; and Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, pp. 147 and 241–46. The artisan militia first emerged in the 14th century and once played a larger role in Rome's military. This role diminished once popes began to rely on mercenary armies in the 15th century. The fourteen *rioni* are the Borgo, Trastevere, Campo Marzio, Ponte, Parione, Regola, Sant'Eustachio, Pigna, Sant'Angelo, Ripa, Campitelli, Monti, Colonna, and Trevi. Unlike the men of his company, the *caporione* did not have to live in the *rione* he represented.

72 Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, pp. 241–46. The members of each neighborhood company nominated three members from whom the *caporione* would choose to serve as *capotoro* for that year.

73 The Capitoline prison was found in the Palace of the Senator at the Capitol and in the district of Campitelli. The other main prisons, the Tor di Nona and the Curia Savelli, were located in Ponte and Regola, respectively. The governor of Rome, before the pope's

companies set out to perform their interregnal duties, which included patrolling the streets, imposing fines on lawbreakers, and preventing looters from pillaging cardinals' palaces.[74]

The *Popolo Romano* also had the traditional right of guarding the gates of Rome during the vacant see. A *caporione*, along with a Roman gentleman, watched each of the city's thirteen gates with a contingent of soldiers recruited by a captain elected in the general council. In the same council, the *caporioni* would be assigned gates by lot.[75] The patricians generally stood guard at the gates, since the *caporioni* had to hear cases related to crimes in their districts and had to attend the meetings of the secret council at the Capitol. The civic magistrates always ensured that this duty was given to "a poor gentleman" and a citizen, since the position paid a small stipend and accorded a degree of honor to its holder.

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death, had transported all those imprisoned for serious crimes, such as theft, banditry, and murder, to the papal prison of Castel Sant'Angelo, which remained locked during the vacant see. With the creation of the *rione* of the Borgo (the neighborhood surrounding the Vatican) in 1586, the *caporione* of the Borgo also released the prisoners housed in the prison of Borgo.

74 On guarding the palaces of cardinals rumored to have been elected pope, see ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 9 May 1555, fol. 27r. The *capotori* could issue summary fines for smaller offenses, such as failure to keep a light at the window. Edicts issued by the conservators imposed a heavy fine of fifty *scudi* on those did not comply with the edict, although a decree issued to the *caporioni* on 6 March 1605 told the patrols not "to use severity in the issuing of penalties," see ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, fol. 244v. Evidently the *caporioni* and their constables, unused to wielding power, abused their newfound authority in the vacant see. A good example of this occurred during the vacant see of Gregory XV, when a *capotoro* took a red gown as a substitute for money from a prostitute who could not pay her fine for not keeping a light at her window. The prostitute responded by having a number of Corsican soldiers retrieve the gown at gunpoint from the *capotoro* and his men. See ASR, TCS, Processi, vol. 67 (1623), fols. 684r–685r.

75 The thirteen gates were San Giovanni, San Paolo, San Sebastiano, San Pancrazio, San Lorenzo, Sant'Agnese, Maggiore, Salaria, Portese, Pio, Latina, Pinciana, and Porta del Popolo. San Giovanni, San Paolo, Maggiore, San Sebastiano, and Popolo, as the busiest gates, always received the greatest share of soldiers. See ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 31 March 1555, fols. 28v–29v; 29 May 1555, fol. 42v; 20, 27, and 28 August 1559, fols. 45v, 54v–55r; 3 May 1572, fols. 114v–115r; and 19 October 1591, fol. 220v. The *caporione* not selected to watch the gates remained at the Capitol with a squad of men.

Noble Offices of the Vacant See

By the late 16th and 17th centuries, members of the most venerable families of Rome, collectively called the Roman Barons, generally did not hold office in the civic government. Yet these princelings often attended the general and secret meetings of the *Popolo Romano* during the vacant see. Moreover, the vacant see allowed certain noble families—the Cesarini, the Mattei, and the Savelli—a direct but ephemeral experience of authority through several hereditary offices tied to the interregnum. More importantly, these positions reaffirmed the importance of their families and accorded them a place of honor among the nobility.

The Cesarini family held the normally ceremonial position of gonfalonier of the *Popolo*, a vestige of Rome's medieval commune. This position acquired a new authority after the pope's death. The gonfalonier, under the supervision of the conservators, patrolled Rome with a contingent of soldiers recruited jointly by the *Popolo Romano* and the Sacred College. His duty was to help the artisan militias maintain peace and order. Giuliano Cesarini, for example, as gonfalonier during Paul IV's vacant see in 1559, played an instrumental role in calming the riots that erupted at the death of the hated Carafa pope.[76] Yet, the conservators also recognized the gonfalonier's potential for troublemaking during the vacant see and consequently limited his activity. In 1585, they ordered him "not to go about [the city] other than to the church of San Giorgio to bless the flag since it was the vacant see and to not stir up a tumult."[77] By the late 16th and 17th centuries, the Cesarini, as gonfaloniers, increasingly played a smaller role in the city's defense during the vacant see.[78] Thereafter, civic magistrates assigned the gonfalonier's duties to a captain of the *Popolo*, elected from among the patriciate at the first meeting of their general council.[79]

A time-honored tradition, recognized by both the College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*, allowed the Mattei dukes to assume the title of "Guardian

76 In a meeting of the *Popolo Romano* during Paul IV's vacant see, the gathered magistrates recognized the "ancient custom of the signor Gonfalonier of the People" to help the *caporioni* watch over the city; see ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, meeting of 21 August 1559, fol. 47v.

77 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, decree of 22 April 1585, fol. 153v. The flag was obviously a symbol of the commune and its traditional privileges.

78 On the gonfalonier in the early modern era, see Rodocanachi, *Les institutions communales*, p. 347. The Cesarini held the office starting in 1530.

79 For the election of the Captain of the *Popolo*, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 19 March 1605, fol. 131r; and ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 192r, and t. 96, *avviso* of 20 August 1644, fol. 222v.

of the Bridges and Ripa" during the vacant see. In this capacity, the duke posted soldiers at the bridges that connected Trastevere with the city's port of Ripa, which were located close to family holdings on both sides of the Tiber. As with many *ancien regime* offices, Mattei's role as guardian of the bridges had its benefits. The Jews in the nearby Ghetto had to pay the duke's soldiers five *giulii* when crossing the Ponte Quattro Capi to bury their dead outside Porta Portese. Ostensibly, this payment was for the Jews' protection, but in essence it was a toll that the Jews resented. During Innocent XI's vacant see of 1689, Jewish leaders petitioned the *capi degli ordini* to be able to use their own guards when crossing the bridge. The cardinals refused the request and the Jews continued paying the Mattei, which they did until the vacant see of Clement XIV (1774).[80] Edicts issued by the *Popolo Romano* throughout the early modern era recognized the Mattei's rights to interregnal emoluments from the Jewish community.[81]

The Savelli family held the most important noble position during the vacant see. This was the position of "Marshal of the Holy Church and Perpetual Guardian of the Conclave," abbreviated as marshal of the conclave. This evolving office first originated as a military post in the 12th century, then assumed a judicial function in the 13th century (which it kept until it was abolished by Innocent X in 1652), and, finally, in the second half of the 16th century it acquired the role of protecting the conclave. The position had remained a hereditary possession of the Savelli family ever since Martin V had accorded it to Battista Savelli in 1430. Before the second half of the 16th century, the position of warden of the conclave had generally been given to a powerful magnate of the Papal States.[82]

Duke Savelli, as marshal of the conclave, served as a go-between for the cardinals. He held the three keys to the only door of the conclave and monitored the four turning wheels (*rote*) through which food passed to the cardinals.

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80 Attilo Milano, *Il Ghetto di Roma* (Rome, 1964), pp. 262–66.

81 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, edict of 5 October 1590, fol. 183r, and edict of 2 February 1621, fol. 274r. The 18th-century treatise on the rights of the conservators during *sede vacante* included the last edict in its text; see ASC, Cred. XVI, vol. 27, "Trattato di Guirisdizione," fols. 296v–297r.

82 For the history of the marshal; see Del Re, *Il maresciallo*. The Savelli held the position of marshal until the extinction of the family in 1712 with the death of Giulio Savelli. Clement XI sold the office to Augusto Chigi, whose family held the office until its abolishment by Paul VI in 1975. With the bulls of 21 March and 7 April 1652, Innocent X abolished the office of marshal of the Conclave, but on the first day of the vacant see of the Pamphili pope, the College of Cardinals reinstated the Savelli to their position; see Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 46–47; and Gigli, *Diario*, 2:731 and 734.

These keys were a powerful symbol of his authority; the duke even incorporated them into the Savelli banner that hung from his apartments in the Vatican. The marshal controlled all access, whether in person or in written communication, to the cardinals in the conclave. Those who wanted entrance into the conclave had to carry specially minted coins, usually made of lead, which bore his arms on one side and the symbol of the vacant see—the crossed keys beneath an umbrella—on the reverse.[83]

To assist him in his duties, Savelli recruited four companies of soldiers that totaled five hundred men. Three of the companies were auxiliaries composed of artisans that either lived near the Savelli palace on the Aventine Hill (also known as Monte Savelli) or near the conclave in the *rione* of Ponte. The first company was composed of fishmongers from the *rione* of Regola; the second of tanners from the same quarter; and the third of brass workers and rosary-makers from Ponte. Although they were divided into regiments of pike men and harquebusiers, the artisans of these regiments lacked military training and were often difficult to control. By the vacant see of 1720, the marshal had replaced them with soldiers supplied by the Sacred College. A far more reliable force was the larger company of two hundred soldiers recruited primarily from artisans who lived near the Savelli ancestral home in Rome and "vassals" from the family fief in Albano. Savelli stationed a corporal and three or four soldiers at each wheel and the main entrance. The remainder of the troops remained at guard in St Peter's Square, where two temporary barracks had been constructed. As a show of force, the day of the closing of the conclave, the soldiers of the marshal marched in a procession from his palace at the Aventine Hill to the Vatican.[84]

All three offices reflected that the vacant see offered new governmental opportunities not only to the ruling bodies, such as the College of Cardinals and *Popolo Romano*, but also to individual nobles and their families. The importance of these interregnal offices to the Roman Barons is reflected in their longevity. The Cesarini acted as gonfaloniers until 1688, when conservators

83 Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 50–51.

84 For the composition of his soldiers and the procession to St Peter's; see BAV, Chigiani, RVIII, cod. b, "Memorie et atti concernente la giurisditione del Marescellato in Sede Vacante," fols. 1–16r for Urban VIII's vacant see, and fols. 17r–58r for that of Innocent. See also Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 52–53. For the vacant see of 1644, the notary who wrote down the marshal's various activities referred to the soldiers as being "da amorevoli di Casa Savelli," fol. 13v. The diarist Gioseffe Gualdi noted that in the vacant see of 1655, the main contingent of Savelli's forces was composed of "many Albanesi, Ricciaroli and other subjects of the signor Prince," see the GRI, MS, "Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi," t. II, fol. 22v.

eliminated the obsolete office to save money. The Mattei served as guardians of the bridges of Rome until 1774. The position of marshal of the conclave, although it passed over to the Chigi family in 1712, survived the political vicissitudes of the papacy in the early modern and modern eras, only to be abolished by Paul VI in 1975.

Jurisdictional Battles

The vacant see thus created a political milieu in which the cardinals, civic magistrates, and Roman Barons asserted a greater authority that was denied them by the living pope. These groups invariably butted heads as they jostled over rights and jurisdictional authority during the interregnum. For example, Duke Savelli, as marshal of the conclave, frequently clashed with the governor of the Borgo over jurisdiction. In the vacant sees of 1644 and 1655 the marshal and the governor argued over possession of the keys to the conclave.[85] In 1655, the governor of the Borgo had a contingent of halberdiers prevent Savelli's soldiers from entering into the Vatican, resulting in a skirmish that wounded two of the governor's men.[86] During his uncle's vacant see in 1644, Taddeo Barberini, in an attempt to assert his family's weak position, quarreled with the marshal over the keys. The *capi degli ordini*, siding with tradition, restored the keys to the marshal. Although they were asserting themselves, the cardinals revealed their weakness as well, since they only decided that Savelli could carry the keys until the newly elected pope could make a decision on the matter.[87]

However, the principal conflict pitted the *Popolo Romano* against the Sacred College as the two authorities, overshadowed by the living pope and his family, vied for political dominion of Rome. The *Popolo Romano* claimed through a venerable but unwritten tradition that it had full authority over the policing of Rome during the vacant see. The Sacred College, often represented by the governor of Rome, asserted itself based on papal bulls and on the apparent failings of the communal government to keep the city in order. The jurisdictional

85 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fols. 378r–387v.

86 BAV, Chigiani, R VIII, cod. b, fol. 54r–v.

87 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fols. 764v–765r and BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte," fol. 117r. The quote is from Gregorio Leti, *Il Cardinalismo di Santa Chiesa, or the History of the Cardinals of the Roman Church* (London, 1670), p. 282. Leti obviously had access to the above anonymous conclave report, as his texts mirrors it word for word.

battles between the two authorities that marked the vacant see focused on patrolling the city, guarding the gates, and issuing decrees.

In principle, the artisan militia under the leadership of the *caporioni* took over the reins of justice. Although the governor supposedly did not send out his *sbirri* "out of respect for the *Popolo*," as the Venetian ambassador wrote in a report in 1559, in practice he frequently had them patrol the streets during the vacant see.[88] We have already seen the *sbirri* administering summary justice in the vacant see of Gregory XIV. Newsletter writers regularly complained of the often substantial presence of the governor's police. In the vacant see of Gregory XIV in 1591, an *avvisi* writer grumbled that the *sbirri* went about the city "as they please," and another commented that after Gregory XV's death in 1623 "the *bargello* of Rome made [his rounds] freely through Rome with a large squad of *sbirri*, well-armed with wheel-locks."[89] The number of *sbirri* patrolling the streets could reach sizable numbers. After Sixtus V's death in 1590, a hundred of the governor's men made their rounds throughout the city, while in the vacant see of Gregory XV the governor ordered "almost all of the police together with the *bargello* to go out every day through the city in order to forestall any troubles and brawls that might arise."[90] Thus, the governor regularly defied the civic custom.

From the extant letters of the governor Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino to the *capi degli ordini* in 1644 we know that the governor of Rome kept the cardinals informed of the most serious violent crimes committed during the vacant see and sought their permission to send forth his *sbirri*. The governor then had become a tool of the cardinals to assert their control over the city in the wake of the pope's death.[91]

The Sacred College also turned its eye to the custodianship of the gates, which the *Popolo Romano* had long claimed as its right in times of crisis, including

88 "Relazione di Luigi [Alvise] Mocenigo," in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II (Florence, 1857), 4:37.

89 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, fol. 331r, *avviso* of 23 October 1591; Urb.lat. 1093, fol. 545r, *avviso* of 19 July 1623.

90 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, fol. 473r, *avviso* of 15 September 1590; ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 9, fol. 206r, *avviso* of 23 July 1623. The Venetian ambassador Agostino Nani noted that during the vacant see of Leo XI the governor sent out fifty of his *sbirri* for the needs of the city, ASVenice, Dispacci, filza 54, dispatch of 30 April 1605, fol. 127r.

91 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fols. 479r–683r. A single letter of Giovanni Beninni exists from the *sede vacante* of Gregory XV, in which the governor notified the cardinals that he had sought out his men to investigate a brawl that had occurred in the city's port of Ripa. See ASV, Conclavi, "Lettere spedite per le morti di Clemente VIII, Leone XI, Paolo V e Gregorio XV," letter of 3 August 1623, fol. 299r.

during the vacant see. Fearing that the *caporioni* and their men could not stop the torrent of vagabonds, bandits, and foreigners that attempted to enter Rome at the death of every pope, the cardinals often ordered the conservators to wall up all but the most frequented gates of the city. The gates left open varied from vacant see to vacant see but generally included Popolo, San Giovanni, San Paolo, San Sebastiano, Pio, Maggiore, and Portese.[92] During a major outbreak of banditry at the onset of Gregory XV's vacant see, the cardinals ordered all of the gates of the city closed. The *Popolo Romano* had to send a delegation of noblemen to the *capi degli ordini* to ask the cardinals to keep some of the gates open. The civic magistrates succeeded, but they had to defend the ability to keep open the gates at subsequent vacancies.[93] Nevertheless, the cardinals sometimes substituted the soldiers of the *Popolo Romano* with *sbirri* or guards from the conclave to watch over the gates.[94]

In addition to asserting its jurisdictional hegemony in Rome, a major reason for the Sacred College in sending out its *sbirri* to watch over the city and its gates was the poor reputation of the artisan militia of the *Popolo Romano*. The historian Pio Pecchiai wrote of them: "the stalwart communal legions of Middle Ages were but a faint memory."[95] Early modern contemporaries would have agreed with him. The Venetian ambassador Alvise Mocenigo dismissed the militia's ability to maintain the peace in a report to the doge, writing that *caporioni* "had the task both day and night [of guarding the city] . . . but every day one hears news of some disorder."[96] A newsletter circulating during Gregory XV's vacant see complained of the "many crimes caused by the little skill of the soldiers new to handling arms."[97] Even Giacinto Gigli, six times elected as a *caporione*, wrote disparagingly of the militia as it prepared for war against the duke of Parma in 1642:

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92 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 12 April 1585, fol. 149v. At the secret council of 2 February 1621, the conservators received an order to "immediately have walled those Gates that are customarily walled on the occasion of the vacant see (fol. 273v)." Other examples include: BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 9 December 1565, fol. 148r; Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of 13 April 1585, fol. 171r (which stated that only six gates remained opened); Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 September 1590, fol. 500v; and Urb.lat. 1073, a*vviso* of 16 March 1605, fol. 129r, noted that the cardinals ordered all the gates but Popolo, Pia, San Giovanni, and San Paolo closed.

93 ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 17 October 1591, fol. 117r. See also ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, 15 March 1605, fol. 248r, when the conservators protested to the Sacred College that only the usual gates should be closed.

94 BAV, Urb.lat. 1089, 3 February 1621, fol. 101v.

95 Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, p. 205.

96 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori veneti*, ser. II, 4:37.

97 BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 26 July 1623, fol. 564v.

> These were the artisans of Rome, who for the major part were not trained in the use of arms. Not only do they not know what a musket or pike is, but they do not even know how to wield a sword.[98]

When faced with a superior enemy the militia came up short. In the fall of 1590, bandits raiding the Roman countryside easily overpowered artisans called to defend the city gates and then held them for ransom in vineyards surrounding the city.[99]

The patrols of different *rioni* more often than not clashed against each other over jurisdictional boundaries. During Clement VIII's vacant see in 1605, the *caporioni* of Ponte and Regola met each other at the boundaries of their *rioni* and with "each one claiming that it was his jurisdiction," they came to blows in fight that left eight soldiers wounded and two dead.[100] Boundaries between the *rioni* remained fluid until the 18th century, and even civic officials remained confused about their exact location. For example, the chair-maker Giovanni Romano, whose shop sat along the boundaries between Parione and Sant'Eustachio near Sant'Andrea dalle Valle, served in the militia of the *caporione* of Parione during Clement's vacant see, but a month later, during the short-lived Leo XI's vacant see, he marched with the patrol of the *caporione* of Sant'Eustachio.[101]

The deliberate defense of authority rather than ignorance of f neighborhood boundaries caused many of the skirmishes between the artisan patrols. The reckless pretension of the *caporione* of Regola, Benedetto Finocchieti, during Urban VIII's vacant see serves as an extreme example. Finocchieti involved his patrol in at least two battles while on patrol. During the night of 14 August 1644, he ordered the artisans of his patrol to advance against the patrol of Parione when the two encountered each other in the Piazza della Monte Pietà. Upon hearing the fracas, soldiers guarding the palace of Taddeo Barberini joined the fray. A gunfight ensued between the three groups that killed a member of Parione's patrol and a notary who had stuck his head out of

98 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:398. The pope never called upon the militia during the disastrous war.

99 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 3 October 1590, fol. 511r.

100 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 12 March 1605, fol. 115v. For another example of a fight over jurisdiction that occurred in 1644 between the patrols of Colonna and Trevi, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 24, testimony of various artisans of both patrols, 8 August 1644, fols. 1r–4v.

101 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 553, testimony of Giovanni Romano, 14 May 1605, fol. 1r–v.

a window to investigate the noise.[102] Less than a month later, during the evening of 5 September, the patrol of Regola encountered the patrol of Sant'Angelo at the border between the two *rioni*. Once again, Finocchieti's men, claiming that the patrol of Sant'Angelo "had passed the boundaries of their rione," fired their guns at the opposing patrol.[103] This time several soldiers from both *rioni* were wounded in the fight. The conservators, having had enough of these disputes, sent a squadron of soldiers armed with muskets and halberds to patrol the region.[104] They then had Finocchieti and several soldiers from both *rioni* arrested the next day. Finocchieti was only released after paying a security of 4000 *scudi* and submitting to house confinement for the rest of the vacant see.[105]

Although the *caporione* Finocchieti could be blamed for much of the trouble that occurred between Regola and its neighboring *rione*, his *capotoro* and other members of the patrol took the border between *rioni* seriously. When Francesco Cordelli, Finocchieti's *capotoro*, stopped a Jew wandering outside the Ghetto in Piazza Farnese, he emphasized in his report that he arrested the man "because the piazza was the jurisdiction of the signor *caporione* and my obligation."[106] Both Cordelli and Finocchieti had something to prove, as *caporioni* and *capotori* rarely used such frank language in their reports. The conflict between Regola and Sant'Angelo had been brewing for much of the vacant see. On 14 August 1644 an off-duty member of the patrol of Regola fought with a member of the patrol of Sant'Angelo outside a tavern in the latter's *rione*.[107]

Conflicts over jurisdiction nevertheless remained a constant problem during the vacant see, even after Benedict XIV established their modern boundaries in 1744. A treatise written after 1767 on the powers of the *Popolo Romano* during the vacant see repeatedly warned the *caporioni* and the *capotori* to not "make the rounds outside the boundaries of one's own *rione*" and to "not give any cause for contrasts and imbroglios."[108] This proved to be difficult task, as

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102 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Governor Giovanni Girolamo to the *capi degli ordini*, 15 August 1644, fol. 529r–v. For the investigation, see ASR, TCS, busta 144, c. 147, testimony of various patrolmen, 24–27 August 1644, fols. 1r–16v.

103 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Governor Giovanni Girolamo to the *capi degli ordini*, 5 September 1644, fol. 561r. See also ASV, Segretario di State, Avvisi, t. 96, *avviso* of 10 September 1644, fol. 242r.

104 ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 96, *avviso* of 10 September 1644, fol. 242r.

105 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:430.

106 ASR, TCS, b. 147, c. 135, report of Francesco Cordelli, 30 July 1644, fol. 1r.

107 ASR, TCS, b. 147, c. 149, testimony of Andrea Castellani and Vincenzo Bicci, 14 August 1644, fols. 1r–2r.

108 ASC, Cred. XV, vol. 27, "Trattato," fol. 277r. See fols. 182v, 183r, and 185r for similar statements.

the vacant see opened up new horizons not only for the *Popolo Romano* but also for its individual members. During the vacant see of Alexander VII in 1667, the *caporione* of Ripa clashed with the *bargello* of the Senator, the head of the Capitoline police in normal times, who sometimes was charged with helping the various patrols arrest troublemakers. The *caporione* stopped the *bargello* as he was arresting a butcher and taking him to jail for carrying a sword. Demanding why "he went to taking prisoners in his *rione*," the *caporione* seized the prisoner and took him to the Capitoline jails with his men.[109]

The Sacred College responded to the deficiencies of the *Popolo Romano* by taking over the defense of the city. After the death of short-lived pope Urban VII (1590), the Venetian ambassador Alberto Badoer wrote that because many outlaws had entered Rome in the previous vacant see of Sixtus V, the cardinals

> have resolved henceforth to have all the gates walled up except the three most frequented, where thirty soldiers of [Honorato] Gaetano are to be posted at each one, and for the satisfaction of the Romans there will be an assistant gentleman. Moreover, the *caporioni* do not patrol at night.[110]

Instead of the *caporioni* and their militia, the *capi degli ordini* charged Governor Girolamo Matteucci to recruit five hundred men to watch over the city. The *Popolo Romano* "greatly resented" these changes; they sent a letter to the cardinals demanding that "at least the captains of the gates be Romans."[111] Later that week the conservators themselves vainly petitioned the congregation of cardinals that they might recruit two hundred soldiers for the defense of the city.[112]

During the vacant see of Urban VIII, the *Popolo Romano* and the College of Cardinals again battled for jurisdictional control of the city. This time the *Popolo Romano*'s ability to issue edicts was at stake. On 12 August 1644 the conservators met the cardinals in an audience where, according to Gigli, they threatened the *Popolo Romano* with the prospect of sending out "the *bargello*

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109 ASR, TCS, b. 242, testimony of the senator's *bargello*, Ottavio Romano, fol. 19v.

110 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 27 September 1590, fol. 72r–v. The Porta della Terra refers to all the gates on land leading into Rome. The Venetian ambassador Agostino Nani wrote that during Clement VIII's vacant see, the conservators had unsuccessfully petitioned the cardinals concerning the restoration of their custodianship of the gates, see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 54, dispatch of 26 March 1605, fol. 53r.

111 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 29 September 1590, fol. 72v.

112 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 29 September 1590, fol. 76r.

with the *sbirri* through the city after the patrols of the *caporioni* had gone out." Gigli continued, writing that the conservators "protested that the *caporioni* had sufficiently done their duties."[113] The marshal of the conclave, Bernardo Savelli, argued on behalf of the *Popolo Romano*, but apparently to no avail, as Governor Lomellino's reports to the Sacred College show that the *sbirri* patrolled the streets during Urban's vacant see. The skirmishes between the *rioni* of Regola and Sant'Angelo only supported the Sacred College's poor assessment of the *Popolo Romano*'s ability to maintain the public peace. Lomellino, meanwhile, sought permission to send his *sbirri* out at night to prevent future disorders among the patrols of the *caporioni*.[114]

The opposite sides of the Tiber also fought each other with rivaling *bandi*, which could confuse the populace of Rome regarding which authority to follow. A *bando*, for example, issued by the *capi degli ordini* and the cardinal chamberlain on 8 August 1644 forbade conservators from issuing their own edicts "lest the multiplicity of the bandi keep the people in doubt as to which they must obey, which would not only cause confusion but also be very harmful to the law and the public tranquility."[115] In particular, the revocation of licenses to carry weapons that both the *Popolo Romano* and the Sacred College proclaimed at the start of each vacant see caused much trouble in the streets. Servants of prelates, soldiers, and thugs (sometimes indistinguishable from one another) used the uncertainty produced by the rival *bandi* to plead ignorance of the laws or to claim to have viable licenses.[116]

Throughout the latter part of the 16th century and the 17th century, the College of Cardinals and the governor of Rome sought to gain more authority over Rome during the vacant see. In addition to invalidating weapon licenses issued by Capitoline magistrates, the cardinals focused on another way to maintain order in the vacant see: they ordered barbers, surgeons, and doctors to report all cases of violent wounds and deaths that they had examined to the notaries of the governor of Rome. The *bandi* issued on this matter threatened with a double fine those who failed to comply with the order or who submitted their report to another tribunal.[117]

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113 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:428.

114 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Governor Girolamo Giovanni Lomellino to the *capi degli ordini*, 5 September 1644, fol. 529v.

115 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 8 August 1644, fol. 216r.

116 See chapter 3 for further discussion on the guards and familiars of cardinals, ambassadors, and nobles during the vacant see.

117 ASV, Misc. Arm, t. 105C, *bando* of 25 May 1555, fol. 8r; t. 26, *bando* of 28 August 1590, fol. 211r; *bando* of 5 March 1605, fol. 212r; *bando* of 30 January 1621, fol. 213r; *bando* of 9 July

Starting with the vacant see of Gregory XV in 1623, the battle between the *Popolo Romano* and Sacred College grew intense as the cardinals questioned the Capitoline magistrates' long-established ability to issue edicts during the interregnum. On the first of August 1623, the governor of Rome, Giovanni Benini, wrote the *capi degli ordini* that the conservators had intruded on the jurisdictional rights of the Sacred College:

> This morning I saw a new *bando* that had been issued in the name of the Signor Conservators and now I am informed that are talking about proclaiming another. Issuing *bandi* presupposes having jurisdiction concerning the subject that they discuss, and I have said several times in congregation that the conservators do not have [this jurisdiction] and that the tradition through which they advance [its defense] is mere corruption, the continuation of which must not be permitted.[118]

The governor defended the jurisdictional rights of the cardinals but also protected the authority of his own tribunal. He asserted that history was on his side, arguing that "one would not find that in any vacant see there might have been seen *bandi* of the Signor Conservators on the matter of crimes and the governance [of the city]."[119] He continued by pointing out that since conservators "did not have such ability [to issue *bandi* concerning criminal activity] in the *sede piena*," they should not have it during the vacant see, and that "the Bull of Pius IV conceded [this ability] only to the governors of the Borgo and Rome."[120] Benini must have convinced the cardinals with his arguments, as eight days later the *capi degli ordini* and the chamberlain issued a *bando* prohibiting the *caporioni* and their notaries from trying criminal cases and ordering them to refer trials and investigations to the governor of Rome. Nevertheless, this first salvo over the jurisdictional hegemony remained a moot affair. As an extant book of criminal reports from the vacant see of Gregory XV attests, the *Popolo*

1623, fol. 214r; *bando* of 31 July 1644, fol. 216r; *bando* of 9 January 1655, fol. 217r; ASR, Bandi, vol. 5, *bando* of 3 May 1572; and ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 28, *bando* of 19 October 1591 that was placed in the volume of dispatches.

118 ASV, Conclavi, "Lettere spedite per la morte di Clemente VIII, Leone XI, Paolo V e Gregorio XV," letter of 1 August 1623, fol. 298r.

119 ASV, Conclavi, "Lettere spedite per la morte di Clemente VIII, Leone XI, Paolo V e Gregorio XV," letter of 1 August 1623, fol. 298r.

120 ASV, Conclavi, "Lettere spedite per la morte di Clemente VIII, Leone XI, Paolo V e Gregorio XV," letter of 1 August 1623, fol. 298r.

Romano ignored the Sacred College's *bando*.[121] Moreover, the cardinals never addressed the conservators' ability to issue edicts during the vacant see.[122]

Twenty-one years later, however, the cardinals issued a *bando* during Urban VIII's vacant see that revoked and annulled all of the *bandi* published by the conservators.[123] The stated reason for the revocation, as noted above, was the confusion generated by rival edicts of the *Popolo Romano* and the Sacred College. Yet the struggle for jurisdictional authority provided the main impetus behind the cardinals' reasoning. Gigli, as a *caporione*, defended the actions of the conservators, writing they "had issued [the edicts] as usual." The conservators had long proclaimed edicts regulating the city during the vacant see. Although extant copies of these edicts only exist from 1623 onwards, the congregations of the secret councils illustrate that they had made decrees concerning gambling, prostitutes riding in carriages, and maintaining the city's gates.[124] By 1644, the ability of the *Popolo Romano* to proclaim edicts regulating the city had become an unwritten tradition that governors like Beninni and the cardinals countered with Pius IV's *In eligendis*.

The revocation of the power to publish edicts was a great blow to the Capitoline officials, as Gigli indignantly complained that "through this thing the *Popolo* murmured that the Pope had already taken away all the authority of the *Popolo*, and now the College of Cardinals wanted to remove what dominion that remained of theirs in the time of the vacant see."[125] In response the *Popolo Romano* held a congregation on 10 August in which they contemplated throwing the Capitoline fiscal procurator, Angelo Giardino, from the window of the Palace of Conservators for having aided in the invalidation of their edicts "in order to gain the favor of the governor and the cardinals."[126]

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121 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67 (1623). The volume contains almost 2000 pages of reports and trials for a month-long vacant see.

122 The issuing of the *bando* can be found in BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 9 August 1623, fol. 527r. The *avviso* explains that the governor's tribunal "might better attend to the many crimes being committed with the license of *sede vacante*." Gregory XV's vacant see was not the first time that the Sacred College attempted to strip the *Popolo Romano* of its ability to hear criminal cases. During the vacant see of Gregory XIV, an *avviso* told of the *Popolo Romano*'s attempt to maintain its jurisdiction against the encroachment of the governor of Rome. The governor had beseeched the College of Cardinals to prevent Capitoline judges from exercising their duties, see Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 26 October 1591, fol. 338r.

123 ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 8 August 1644, fol. 216r.

124 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:427.

125 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:427. *Popolo* in both instances means the *Popolo Romano*.

126 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:248.

Fortunately for Giardino, cooler heads prevailed and the magistrates decided to send four patricians from old Roman families along with the conservators to the conclave in order to petition the cardinals for the return of their authority. They were denied an audience on that day but met the cardinals in a congregation the day after, where the cardinals threatened to send out the *sbirri* after the patrols of the *caporioni* had performed their rounds. The argument eventually calmed down between the two parties as the cardinals adopted a face-saving measure at the suggestion of Governor Lomellino. The conservators would submit all of the edicts they wished to decree to the College of Cardinals, which after inspecting them would allow the conservators to publish them with the phrase "with the consent and participation of the Sacred College.[127]

This compromise mollified both parties, but only until the next vacant see, that of Innocent X eleven years later. This time the *Popolo Romano* had a much more difficult time defending their jurisdiction. Immediately upon the pope's death, the Sacred College fired the first volley, issuing a *bando* that outlined its jurisdictional supremacy in the interregnum. The *bando* commanded all judicial officials to notify the *capi degli ordini* before administering corporal punishments and monetary fines over twenty-five *scudi*. Decisions made without their approval would be declared null and void. The cardinals specifically targeted the *Popolo Romano*. The *bando* ordered civic magistrates not to "make any changes" concerning the obligation of barbers and surgeons to notify the governor of Rome of injuries that their patients had received during the vacant see. The cardinals emphasized that the Capitoline officials should "precisely comply with the laws that are the *sede piena*," that is, when the pope lived and they could not issue decrees.[128]

The conservators could still issue *bandi*, but they had to submit them to the College of Cardinals before publishing them. On 11 January 1655 the cardinals approved six different edicts that the conservators had sent them, although they had been published the day before.[129] Nevertheless, the process could humble the civic magistrates, as a month later during Innocent's five-month vacant see the *capi degli ordini* and the chamberlain "after mature discussion" allowed the conservators to issue two *bandi*, one concerning the soldiers guarding the city gates and the other regarding monetary punishments that *caporioni* had to pay for failing to inform the conservators of their judicial activities.[130]

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127 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of 16 August 1644, fol. 280r–v.

128 ASR, Bandi, vol. 21, *bando* of 7 January 1655, n. p.

129 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Innocenzio X," fol. 305r.

130 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Innocentio X," 12 February 1655, fol. 443r.

In order to wring these concessions from the Sacred College, the conservators had to beg the *capi degli ordini*. In a letter of 7 January 1655, they emphasized that the College of Cardinals had repealed the *bando* that circumscribed their ability to issue edicts in the vacant see of 1644. The conservators asserted the venerability of these jurisdictional privileges, arguing that they dated to the time of the pontificates of Urban VI, Innocent VII, and Eugenius IV, and that the *Popolo Romano* had "always published *bandi* in the time of the vacant see."[131] At once assertive and obsequious, the conservators expressed the hope the cardinals might continue to grant them this power "from the kindness and grace of Your Excellencies."

The struggle between the Sacred College and the *Popolo Romano* over jurisdictional hegemony during the vacant see did not end in 1655. Vacant sees throughout the rest of 17th century were marked by the jurisdictional tug of war between the two powers.[132] Each argued that it had tradition on its side. The *Popolo Romano* claimed that they had had jurisdiction over the vacant see since time immemorial. In contrast, the cardinals based their authority on the papal bulls dating to 1059, when Nicholas II created the College of Cardinals. Yet, neither side fully asserted itself during the vacant see. The cardinals checked the dominion of the civic magistrates through *bandi* and the increasing role that the governor of Rome assumed during the interregnum. The cardinals in turn were hindered by the word of the bulls that limited them to an administrative role. Although both asserted their authority after the death of the pope, neither was able to fully exercise it in the void of the vacant see. The shadow of the pope loomed over the Sacred College and the Capitol, as one of the most important works of the vacant see was the election of a new leader.

The jurisdictional confusion between the various interregnal authorities fed the violence that so often erupted during the vacant see as the people of Rome, whether noble or common, opted to take advantage of the lapse in authority and make their own law. In many cases, the authorities charged with protecting Rome clashed in bloody skirmishes. The violence of the vacant see was thus endemic to its political structures. Indeed, during the vacant see Rome became a hydra, whose many heads incessantly nipped at each other in their quest for power.

131 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Innocentio X," 7 January 1655, fol. 912r.

132 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, vol. 26, *bandi* of 1667–1700, fols. 242r–246r.

CHAPTER 2

The Pope is Dead! Rumor and Ritual in the Vacant See

No other event in early modern Rome inspired so much consternation and curiosity on the part of the populace as the vacant see. Initiated by the pope's death, the vacant see ended with the election of the new pope and his coronation in St Peter's Basilica three days later. The coming of the vacant see was heralded by rumors, as the populace discussed the possibility of the pope's death, especially if he was afflicted by serious illnesses or ailments. Once the pope died a series of rites, centered at both the Capitol and the Vatican, announced his death to the city, marked the end of his regime, and highlighted the temporary vacancy of the Apostolic See. The pope's death also saw the divisive break with the relationship between ruled and ruler. Rumor and rites served to tie Romans together in a collective moment of reflection as the people of the city reassessed the pope and his regime, and looked forward to the possible benefits of the new pontificate.

This collective moment might be seen as having three phases, each playing some role in announcing the pope's death and the coming of the vacant see. Rumors surrounding the health of the pope and the anticipation (or in some cases dread) of his eventual death marked the first phase of this three-fold process. The eagerness for the pope's death was particularly evident if the pope had enjoyed an especially long pontificate or had promulgated unpopular measures that had antagonized his subjects. In this atmosphere, gossip and rumor at the papal court and in the streets kept the city informed about the pope's health and sometimes generated false reports of his death.[1] This stage was the most informal of the three phases and did not necessarily lead to the next two: the official announcement of the pope's death through a series of rites, and his burial. Nevertheless, rumor was a collective assessment of the dead pope's reign, and therefore an aspect of the political culture of early modern Rome.

The second phase of this process was the actual death of the pope. A series of civic and papal rites announced his death and underscored the end of his regime. These rites were also important in heralding the newfound yet

1 On ritual moments, see Turner, *The Ritual Process*, especially chapters 3 and 5.

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ephemeral power of the *Popolo Romano* and the College of Cardinals.[2] This official announcement made it apparent to all that the pope had really died, although this process was fraught with confusion and disorder.

The final phase—the burial of the pope in the Vatican—highlighted his mortal nature and the ephemerality of his worldly power.[3] By the 16th century, the papacy had fully adopted the *Novendiales*, the nine days of funeral obsequies that further proclaimed his death to the entire city and world, and that gave nonresident cardinals the opportunity to travel to Rome to participate in the papal election. For three of those days, masters of ceremonies displayed the pope's body up in St Peter's for the public to venerate by kissing its foot. Paradoxically, this last rite emphasized the sacredness of the pope and the people's connection to their prince, which juxtaposed sharply with the previous rites and customs that severed the bonds between the prince and his subjects. As we shall see in chapter 5, it also jarred with the censure that some popes experienced in death.

Rumors and the Pope's Death

Throughout a pope's reign the possibility of his demise sparked rampant discussion among a populace ever attuned to visible signs that his reign was drawing to an end. The watchful eyes and attentive ears of the populace focused on changes in the daily activities of the popes and gossip coming from the papal court. This information disseminated as rumors through the streets and squares by word of mouth, and eventually to a wider audience via newsletters.[4] Public discussion centered on the pope's poor health. Persistently ill popes

2 On these civic and papal rites announcing the vacant see, see Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 228–35; and Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*.

3 For a good background on early modern papal burial rites, see Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 28–40.

4 On rumor surrounding the popes in early modern Rome, see Renaud Villard, "Incarnare una voce: Il caso della sede vacante (Roma, XVI secolo)," *Quaderni storici* 121(2006), 39–68; and John M. Hunt, "Rumour, Newsletters, and the Pope's Death in Early Modern Rome," in *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections*, eds. Simon Davies and Puck Fletcher (Leiden, 2014), pp. 143–58. On rumor in general, see Jean-Noël Kapferer, *Rumors: Uses, Interpretations and Images*, trans. Bruce Fink (New Brunswick, 1990); Tamotsu Shibutani, *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis, 1966); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 144–48; Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 335–405; Massimo Rospocher and Rosa Salzberg, "An Evanescent Public Sphere: Voices, Spaces, and Publics in Venice during the

stimulated the fears and hopes of Romans as they waited for a vacant see that could take months, sometimes even years, to come, as popes, typically elected as old men, often suffered from a myriad of ailments and illnesses.[5] This can be gleaned from the newsletters that reported the rumors surrounding the prolonged illnesses of Paul IV (1558–59), Gregory XIII (1581–85), Sixtus V (1590), and Clement VIII (1604–05).[6]

Rumors are the best way to gauge Roman attitudes toward popes as their regimes came to an end, since they provided information, both true and false, at its freshest when compared with printed news and even the famous *avvisi*, the manuscript newsletters of Rome.[7] However, rumors are difficult to track in early modern Rome, since they tended to disseminate anonymously and primarily through oral channels. Very little direct evidence survives that is not filtered through diaries, ambassadorial dispatches, and, above all, newsletters which conveyed court gossip and street rumor to a broad audience. These elite sources, although often viewing rumors in a negative light as false and disruptive, do provide us with a great deal of information on their content, how they spread, and the motives behind their creation and dissemination.

Romans were especially shrewd observers of the pope's ceremonial regiment. His failure to perform his duties as the supreme pontiff and bishop of Rome were considered telltale signs of his imminent death. For example, Pius V was so feeble for much of early 1572 that he could not say mass on Sundays, provoking rumors of his approaching death (which actually occurred on the first of May of that year).[8] Failing to perform sacred rites on important feast days was especially disconcerting to the city. The civic magistrate Giacinto Gigli recorded in his diary every illness that beset the popes in first half of the 17th century. He especially took note of the rumors that circulated

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Italian Wars," in Rospocher, *Beyond the Public Sphere*, pp. 93–114; and Elizabeth Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), pp. 126–64.

5 On the similar flourishing of rumor in England concerning the long-lived monarchs Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, see Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, pp. 357–60.

6 For Paul IV and Clement VIII, see von Pastor, *HOP* (1933), 14:413 and 24:432–34. For Sixtus V, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avvisi* of 11 and 25 August 1590, fols. 407r–428r.

7 On the *avvisi*, see Mario Infelise, "Roman *Avvisi*: Information and Politics in the Seventeenth-Century," in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700*, eds. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), pp. 212–28; Cesare D'Onofrio, "Gli 'Avvisi' di Roma dal 1554 al 1605," *Studi romani* 10 (1962), 529–48; Brendan Dooley, "De bonne main: Les pourvoyeurs de nouvelles à Rome au XVII^e^ siècle," *Annales: Histoire, sciences sociales* 6 (1999), 1317–44; and Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), 80–85.

8 Von Pastor, *HOP* (1929), 18:455.

among the people when popes missed important ceremonies and events. In 1622 rumors raced through Rome when poor health forced Gregory XV to miss the bestowal of dowries to young women that took place every Annunciation at Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Similarly, Gigli wrote that the people read the signs of Urban VIII's coming death when he did not attend his liturgical duties on Ascension and Corpus Christi in 1643. Finally, during the pontificate of Innocent X, he noted the talk of the people when the pope failed to meet the newly elected officials of the *Popolo Romano* in August 1651 and, later, when he holed himself up in the papal palace at the Quirinal Hill for the entire month of August 1654.[9]

Popes sought to conceal their poor health by continuing to perform their sacred duties as the Vicars of Christ. Both Paul IV and Pius IV, despite their ailments, continued to perform their duties until their deaths. Pius IV, although seriously ill throughout much of 1565, nevertheless managed to celebrate Easter mass at St Peter's. The Tuscan ambassador Ugolino Grifoni reported that Pius "sang it with a voice so clear and sonorous that he put to shame Cardinal Vitelli," who had assisted him at the mass.[10] Despite this subterfuge, rumors swirled around Pius's health and death for the rest of the year. Pasquinades circulated throughout the city mocking his attempts to hide his poor health. One wondered:

> Has he died or has he not? Has he grown worse?
> Is he getting worse or not?
> Now he has gotten better.
> He has lost his speech. Now he has lost the use of his arms.[11]

Likewise, Gregory XIII tried to conceal his long illness of 1581, but his condition became so serious that he could not carry out his sacred functions for much of the year, causing excitement about his certain death.[12]

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9 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:102, 1:308, 2:636, and 2:712.

10 Retrieved from the Medici Archive Project, http://documents.medici.org, doc. 20067; ASF, Carteggio Universale, Cosimo I and Francesco I, vol. 515, letter of 23 April 1565, fol. 376r.

11 *Pasquinate romane nel Cinquecento*, eds. Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo, and Angelo Romano (Rome, 1982), 2:931. The fluctuating health of Alexander VII during the last year of his pontificate (1667) inspired similar pasquinades; see Gregorio Leti, *Il Sindicato di Alessandro VII* (S. l., 1667), 55–58. For example, Leti copied this pasquinade into his account of Alexander's death: "Is the pope dead? Is he alive, and healthy?/God keeps him for a hundred hours/The Pope as our lord/He has his life and his death in hands . . . To trick the Christian people by always being moribund, and never dying."

12 BAV, Urb.lat. 1049, *avviso* of 16 April 1581, fol. 324r. Gregory recovered later that year, but remained in poor health throughout his pontificate, which lasted until 1585. For the

Moreover, popes frequently made public appearances to quell rumors of their approaching deaths. In November 1602, Clement VIII made an appearance at the balcony of the Vatican palace to instill confidence in the people regarding his good health.[13] However, these demonstrations often backfired, spurring even more gossip and rumor. On 27 March 1644, Urban VIII attempted to give an Easter benediction from a window overlooking St Peter's Square rather than the customary location, the portico of the church. It was rumored that Urban was so weak that when servants dressed the pope for the occasion, "it was necessary to unstitch the sleeves of his gown and throw it over him without moving his arms" for fear that the ordeal might kill him. The servants then had to prop the pope up as he gave his benediction—a sight that only served to feed the rumors circulating among the people.[14]

Romans also looked to omens and astrological portents for harbingers of the pope's death.[15] In particular they looked to the skies, reading into the appearances of comets, solar and lunar eclipses, and strange stars as signs regarding the imminent death of the pontiff. Public speculation on these signs in turn gave rise to rumors throughout the city. Despite Paul IV's attempts to keep his dropsy a state secret throughout the summer of 1559, news of his illness reached the populace, and by June 17 a rumor—one of many that month—circulated that he had died. The appearance of a comet over the Vatican that night further convinced the people that Paul had died.[16] The predictions and prophecies of professional astrologers gave credence to these beliefs and engendered rumors in their own right. A lunar eclipse of January 1628 and solar eclipses of 1628 and January 1630 provoked rumors that Urban VIII's death was at hand. These rumors found support in the prognostications of astrologers, further stimulating the hopes of the people and the fears of the Barberini. Urban, an avowed believer in astrology, had recourse to the expertise of the magus Tommaso Campanella to counter the malefic effects of these celestial

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continual discussion of his health during first half of 1584 when he proposed making a trip to Bologna, see *avvisi* in BAV, Urb.lat. 1582, fols. 17v, 21r, 27r, 37r–v, 40r–v, 64r, 67r, 73r–v, 80r–v, 82r, 92v–93r, 105r, 107r, 119r, 128r–v, 157r, 160r, and 173r.

13 Von Pastor, *HOP* (1933), 24:432.

14 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:414.

15 On omens and the pope's death, see Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 6–11.

16 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 17 June 1559, fol. 49. See also von Pastor, *HOP* (1924), 14:411–13. An *avviso* of 8 July 1559 gave Paul IV two weeks to live and noted that the city and court was buzzing with talk of the upcoming conclave; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, fol. 58v. The predictions of astrologers based on a solar eclipse produced rumors of Gregory XIII's death in 1581; see *HOP* (1928), 26:398–99. Likewise, a solar eclipse supposedly foretold Innocent IX's death after a long illness on 20 December 1591; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 1 January 1592, fol. 2v.

occurrences.[17] Nevertheless, these rumors provoked the city and even had a far-reaching impact beyond Rome. In May 1630, Orazio Morandi, the abbot of Santa Prassede, prophesied that Urban would die from the harmful celestial influences emanating from a solar eclipse. Newsletter writers immediately picked up on Morandi's prognostication. Soon this rumor was disseminating not only through the streets of Rome by word of mouth, but also throughout Italy and Europe via the newsletters. Other astrologers added to this chorus of rumors with their predictions once Morandi's prophecy became widely known. The false news of Urban's death acquired so much credence that Spanish and German cardinals outside of Rome made preparations to take part in the conclave.[18]

As the example of Urban VIII reveals, astrologers' prognostications of the pope's death were quite common and helped to spark rumors in the city and beyond.[19] Unnatural or sudden weather changes also provoked rampant discussion and ominous interpretations among the people. For example, as Sixtus V neared death in the Quirinal Palace on 31 July 1590, the once clear summer day suddenly turned stormy. Supposedly at the hour of his death a lightning bolt struck his coat-of-arms, which had been placed above the entrance to the Jewish Ghetto. The Savoyard ambassador Carlo Muti commented that immediately there arose "such a discourse among the people who accorded the events so many sinister interpretations."[20] More than a half century later, during the severe flooding of the Tiber in December 1647, inquisitors jailed an astrologer for predicting that once the water receded Innocent X, who was suffering from gallstones, would die. This prognostication, like many others, was most likely stirred by political factors, since the populace blamed Innocent for high bread prices produced by the famine of 1646–48.[21]

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17 Daniel P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (University Park, PA, 1959, repr. 2000), 205–07.

18 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:195. The rumors provoked by Morandi's prophecy sparked "much discussion in writing that dealt with the election of the new pope as if it was the vacant see," which in turn caused the Spanish and German cardinals to prepare for their journeys to Rome. See the newsletter of 18 May 1630 in the appendix of Luigi Amabile, *Fra Tommaso Campanella, la sua cogiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia* (Naples, 1882), 2:149. See also Brendan Dooley, *Morandi's Last Prophecy and the End of Renaissance Politics* (Princeton, 2002).

19 On prophecy and prognostications in early modern Italy, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1990).

20 AST, Corteggio diplomatico, m. 11, dispatch of 31 July 1590, n. p.

21 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:509.

Other omens were more mundane but nevertheless managed to hold the attention of the city. Despite his attempts to conceal his illness throughout the autumn of 1565, Pius IV's fragility was increasingly visible to Romans. Popular belief head that the pope would not live to see the New Year. This belief was supported in their minds because on the first Sunday of Advent, the candle nearest the papal throne went out for no apparent reason.[22] Nearly a century later, Romans fixed their attention on *Fountain of the Bees*, which Bernini had completed for Urban VIII in April 1644. In the dedication Bernini had inscribed that Urban was in the twenty-second year of his pontificate. When he later amended the dedication to read properly as twenty-one years, the people, according to Gigli, "took it as an augury that Pope Urban would not reach the twenty-second year [of his pontificate]."[23] No doubt the popular belief that no pope would ever reach the twenty-five—year pontificate of Peter, the first bishop of Rome, fed this belief among the people. In the early modern era, most pontificates lasted less than ten years, so Urban's reign of twenty-one years was quite extraordinary.[24]

Although popes and their families sought to conceal any signs that their regimes were coming to an end, the very actions that they took to prepare for the coming vacant see only contributed to the birth of rumor and its corollary, confusion. As Pius IV lay indisposed in bed, the cardinal-nephew and the governor of Rome had all but four of the city gates locked to keep bandits and outlaws from entering the city. Due to this measure, the people "took it that [Pius] was dead."[25] The introduction of troops, stationed at the gates and the conclave, was also read as a sign that the pontiff was near death or had died. A newsletter of 23 February 1605 reported that Clement VIII "was about to die because another company of Corsican soldiers, which was outside [the city], was ordered into Rome, and on Monday additional weapons . . . were extracted from Castel Sant'Angelo to arm them."[26] Two weeks later, another newsletter observed that Clement's family—the Aldobrandini—had placed guards at the palace of the pope's niece and at their villa in Frascati, which its writer

22 Von Pastor, *HOP* (1928), 26:398–99.

23 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:423.

24 Marco Besso, *Roma e il Papa nei proverbi e nei modi di dire* (1904; repr. Florence, 1971), 200. For the both popular and theological belief in Peter's years, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 11–19.

25 BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 9 December 1565, fols. 148r–v.

26 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 23 February 1605, fol. 86r. The Cardinal San Giorgio refers to Cinzio Aldobrandini, the nephew of Clement VIII.

concluded was "a bad sign."[27] Furthermore, Clement's family had their valuables removed from the villa, "just as is done during the vacant see," a reference to the widespread crime that followed a pope's death.[28] These were necessary precautions because bandits from Abruzzo—getting wind of rumors of Clement's death—had marched toward Frascati and its environs with the hope of plundering the villa.

The most visible sign of the pope's approaching death was the governor of Rome's transference of the "most important prisoners"—the oft-used phrase in official reports and newsletters—from the city's many jails to the iron-tight dungeons of Castel Sant'Angelo.[29] This euphemism meant not only dangerous prisoners, such as bandits and murderers, but also those guilty of capital crimes (such as forgery and treason) and heresy. The governor had these prisoners moved to Sant'Angelo because the *Popolo Romano* exercised the right to open the four main prisons of the city, freeing all those held for petty offenses (theft, gambling, and debt).

The decision to have the prisoners transferred to the Castello was generally made by the cardinal-nephew, and it was a difficult one to make, since it roused suspicions once the populace saw the procession of shackled prisoners threading its way through from the city's prisons in the dead of night. It was only made once the pope's condition was considered hopeless. Nevertheless, it was one that the cardinal-nephews and papal authorities agonized over, delayed, and kept a secret once made. For example, the cardinal-nephew of Clement VIII waited until his uncle suffered a stroke before having the serious prisoners removed to the secure jails of Castel Sant'Angelo. Once the prisoners were transferred, the Savoyard agent, Anastasio Germanico, informed his prince that "those who saw this took it that the pope had passed to a better

27 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avvisi* of 2 and 5 March 1605, fols. 97r and 124r.

28 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 23 February 1605, fol. 86v.

29 For the prisons of Rome, see Antonio Bertolotti, *Le prigioni di Roma nei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII* (Rome, 1890). For the Tor di Nona, see Alberto Cametti, "La torre di Nona e la contrada circostante dal medio evo al secolo XVII," *ASRSP* 39 (1916), 411–66. For the prisons of the Corte Savella, see Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 30–33. For the Capitoline prisons, see Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol in Ancient and Modern Times*, trans. Frederick Lawton (London, 1906), pp. 106 and 160–66. For the jails of the governor of the Borgo, see Del Re, "Il governatore di Borgo," pp. 21–22. For the dungeons of Castel Sant'Angelo, see Rodocanachi, *Le Château Saint-Ange*. The prisons of the Tor di Nona were located near the north bend of the Tiber River. Those of the Corte Savella were located at the western end of the Via Giulia, and those of the Borgo near Santa Maria Traspontina, outside the Vatican.

life."[30] Eighteen years later the family of Gregory XV attempted to hide his protracted illness. However, once he neared death a newsletter reported that "already the house of Ludovisi was seen in mourning and the prisoners have been sent to Castel Sant'Angelo in great numbers."[31] The number of prisoners witnessed by onlookers could be staggering. On this occasion, the Tuscan ambassadors Francesco Niccolini and Curtio Picchera estimated that more than two hundred prisoners had been relocated to Castel Sant'Angelo.[32]

Confusion could reign in the process of transferring the prisoners. The Pamphili family had the prisoners moved to Castel Sant'Angelo after Innocent X, suffering from bladder problems and developing a fever, "was held dangerously close to death."[33] Innocent lived for another four years, but the prisoners' transference provoked rumors of his death and resulted in a spate of violence throughout the city. Papal families thus often waited until the last minute to make this decision, to avoid confusing the populace and creating further rumors. When the governor of Rome asked Cesare Facchinetti, the cardinal-nephew of the ailing Innocent IX, in January 1592 about moving

30 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 5 March 1605, fol. 123v and AST, Carteggio Diplomatico, m. 21, letter of 3 March 1605, n. p.

31 BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, undated *avviso*, fols. 524r–v. For further examples, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 5 October 1591, fol. 300r: "other prisoners were transported to Castello on the occasion of the illness of the pope." Gregory XIV has been ill for most of his pontificate. Since he grew increasingly feeble in the autumn of 1591, his cardinal-nephew Emilio Sfrondrati had the more important criminals moved to the papal dungeons almost two weeks before his death on 16 October. When Urban VIII, who had been ill with dysentery and catarrh, grew worse on the morning of 27 July 1644, his cardinal-nephew Francesco Barberini ordered the prisoners relocated to Castel Sant'Angelo two evenings later. See ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi di Roma, t. 96, *avviso* of 30 July 1644, fol. 303r and ASVe, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 121, dispatch of 30 July 1644, 44r.

32 ASF, Mediceo del principato, Carteggio diplomatico, f. 3338, dispatch of 7 July 1623, fol. 470r. Sometimes cardinal-nephews ordered the executions of the most serious prisoners to prevent escapes that often happened with the opening of the prisons. This, too, provoked rumors and speculation. For example, when Gregory XIV's cardinal-nephew had six prisoners executed, word spread that the pope was about to die; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 28 September 1591, fol. 275r.

33 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:632. The cardinal-nephew, Camillo Pamphili, also had a million *scudi* and other treasures moved from the papal palace on the Quirinal to the family palace in Piazza Navona (in fear of looting from papal servants). Innocent's illness still caused confusion as he neared death four years later. According to the Savoyard agent, Onorato Gino, news that Innocent had received extreme unction provoked rumors of his death, causing the prisons to be opened and turning the city "topsy-turvey [sottosopra]." See the letter of 28 December 1654; AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 66, n. p.

the prisoners of importance, Facchinetti responded that "Innocent was in good condition" and that "it would be far worse if his condition were made public."[34] The decision was delayed, and Innocent died a few days later, before the prisoners could be moved, which caused even more chaos as hardened criminals escaped as the *caporioni* opened the jails.

Romans looked forward to the pope's death and his vacant see for a variety of reasons. One of the most important centered on how Romans viewed the pope at the end of his reign. Popes who had ruled rather sternly or who had failed to keep the city supplied with an abundance of inexpensive grain faced the hatred of the populace as they neared death's door. The people of the city thus anticipated the change of regime and the subsequent lifting of oppressive hardships. For example, Romans grew so weary of the high price of meat and the lack of grain under Gregory XV—both of which were abundant and less costly under Paul V—that they kept an astute watch over the health and ceremonial regime of the infirm pope with the hope that "perhaps through his death the anguish they feel will be assuaged."[35] Moreover, the people were also eager to express their criticism of such popes once they died. An anonymous conclavist present at the conclave of 1644 wrote that "the length of Urban VIII's pontificate, with its variety of events and with so many illnesses of the pope that took place during his reign, made the people of Rome bold enough to hope for a new pontiff, and perhaps a milder and more peaceful government."[36]

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34 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 1 January 1592, fol. 2r. For a rather daring example, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 5 October 1591, fol. 296r, in which the bandit, Captain Marco da Monte Falco, escaped from papal guards while being transferred to Castel Angelo before the death of Gregory XIV in 1591. Once he had been led inside Castel Sant'Angelo, the captain stole a cape and hat from the fortress' wardrobe. In the disorder surrounding the arrival of the new prisoners, he made his escape by pretending to be the castellan's servant, walking out of the fortress without anyone noticing him.

35 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 719r.

36 BAV, Urb.lat. 1650, "Relatione del Conclave, e tratti de Cardinali per la Sede Vacante d'Urbano 8.o nella creatione d'Innocenzo X.o," fol. 4r. Ameyden noted that Romans were eager for change as Urban VIII neared death. In an *avviso* of 8 August 1643—a year before Urban had died—he reported that "[t]his people, desirous of novelty (as in all elective governments)," began to note that popes rarely outlived their doctors (based on observations of the three pontificates). See Bastiaanse, *Teodoro Ameyden*, 304. Similarly, the Mantuan ambassador Giovanni Battista Tarabucci noted in a dispatch of 20 May 1643 that, after twenty years of Urban's pontificate, Romans "were eager for change," see von Pastor, *HOP* (1938), 28:402. A pasquinade written after Urban's death summed up the eagerness of the people for the end of his reign. It read, "Finally Urban VIII has indeed died./It was believed that his papacy would be eternal,/but if the living have a thought so

The Barberini pope had increased taxes and imposed several burdens on his subjects in order to wage war against the Duke of Parma from 1641 to 1644.

However, Romans could greet the pope's death with good cheer regardless of his popularity. As many contemporary observers noted, the populace desired change, especially in the case of long-lived popes. Despite Paul V's high esteem among the people in Rome for keeping them fed with bread, Gigli wrote concerning the end of his sixteenth-year pontificate that "[i]n sum he was worthy of reigning much longer for his virtues, even if the mob seemed annoyed with the length of his reign for no other reason than it desired new things."[37] In the case of long pontificates, such as Paul's, the people, especially those with connections to the papal court, simply desired a new pontificate that would open the doors of patronage to a different set of officials, servants, and prelates. Here we are presented with the blasé attitude behind the Roman proverb, "if a pope dies, another will be made."[38]

But even short-lived popes faced the eagerness of the populace for change. A pasquinade written after the death of the amiable pope Pius IV in 1565 complained that his pontificate of six years felt more like twelve. Disappointment with the lack of papal patronage motivated this lament. The anonymous author of the pasquinade continued with a protest against the Lombard pope's bestowal of offices and rewards on his "tedeschi" relatives and followers.[39]

Others looked forward to the pope's death due to the new freedoms the vacant see brought to Rome: as we have seen in previous chapters, some hoped to profit from the vacant see through robbery and burglary, and others sought revenge against their rivals and neighborhood enemies. Prisoners desired the freedom that came with the emptying of the various jails of Rome. Merchants and bankers, who wagered on the lengths of pontificates, anticipated windfalls from a successful prediction of a pontiff's death.[40] During the papal

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wicked,/it is that the deceased has a perpetual see in hell." The pasquinade can be found at the Medici Archive Project, http://documents.medici.org, MdP 6425, fol. 458r.

37 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:80. After the death of Gregory XV, Gigli remembered the disappointed hope the people had for Paul's successor: "When he assumed the papacy there was an incredible expectation that the people had of him. . . . [The people], desirous of new things, was annoyed by the length of the pontificate of Paul V. But in the shortest time they realized how they had been tricked," p. 120.

38 Besso, *Roma e il Papa*, p. 312.

39 Valerio Marucci et al., eds. *Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento* (Rome, 1983), 2:939.

40 The practice had become so prevalent that Gregory XIV banned it along with wagering on papal elections in a bull of 21 March 1591. Gregory XIV issued an Italian translation so that bankers and gamblers could read it; see Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Library, "Bolla della Santita di N.S. Gregorio PP XIV contra chi fà scommesse sopra la

interregnum, the *Popolo Romano*, as we have seen, acquired new jurisdictional authority. In many cases false reports of a pope's death prompted conservators and *caporioni* to rush to the Capitoline to take part in the general council and to commence with their jurisdictional duties. A newsletter of 1605 told of one exuberant *caporione* of Camp Marzio who paraded through his quarter with his standard "as if it were the vacant see." The anonymous author concluded, "Such is the desire of some, both the wicked and the stupid, that His Holiness die."[41]

Popes were aware of this desire for their death. For instance, as Paul V was passing the Tor di Nona on a trip back to the Quirinal Palace, some of the prisoners housed in its jails began shouting "Long Live Pope Paul V!" and "Liberty! Holy Father!" According to a newsletter, the pope became disturbed at these words, thinking that "they wished his death already so that the prisoners would be free during the vacant see."[42]

Rumors of the pope's death thus fulfilled several desires of the Roman people. They were a form of political discourse in which Romans commented on the policies of the reigning pope.[43] But more than that, rumors reflected the eagerness of the city for the vacant see, during which all sorts of social and political agendas, ranging from personal vengeance to protests against the dead popes, could be executed. Whatever their origin or the motives behind them, rumors allowed many of those barred from the halls of power to voice their opinion, and in some cases allowed them to shape the world around them.

Popes recognized the power of rumor, and consequently took measures against its disseminators. In 1572 Pius V promulgated the constitution *Contra scribentes, exemplantes et dictantes monita vulgo dicta gli avvisi e ritorni*, which banned writings that defamed the pope and other prominent men and that spread rumors and predictions of the pope's death.[44] Popes hounded astrolo-

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vita & morte ò sopra la futura elettione del Pontefice Romano ò sopra le promotioni dei Cardinali della Santa Chiesa Romana." For wagering on the election, see John M. Hunt, "Betting on the Papal Election," Occasional Paper Series, 32 (Las Vegas, Center for Gaming Research, University Libraries, 2015); and Renaud Villard, "Le conclave des parieurs: Paris, opinion publique et continuité du pouvoir pontifical à Rome au XVI^{e} siècle," *Annales: Histoire, sciences sociales* 64e (2009), 375–403.

41 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 26 February 1605, fols. 90r–v. For a similar case involving a rumor of Paul V's death and the accidental freeing of the prisoners in the city's jails by the *caporioni*, in January 1621, see Gigli, *Diario*, 1:80.

42 BAV, Urb.lat. 1077, *avviso* of 4 July 1609, fol. 318r.

43 See Ethan H. Shagan, "Rumors and Popular Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1800* (New York, 2001), 39–66.

44 Infelise, "Roman *Avvisi*," pp. 214–15.

gers as well. On 15 July 1630, Urban VIII, both frightened and angered by the whirlwind of predictions concerning his death, had Morandi and other astrologers arrested and jailed.[45] A year later, Urban, still roiling from the rumors of his demise, issued the bull *Inscrutabilis*, which forbade the prediction of the deaths of popes and other prelates on the pain of death. Ecclesiastics, like Morandi, who accounted for the majority of astrologers, would lose their clerical status if they made prophecies of any kind concerning the pope. These measures, although effective at stopping individual newsletter writers and astrologers, did little to stop the dissemination of rumor. This was principally because rumors traveled—in their freshest form of media—through oral and anonymous channels, difficult for the papacy to detect, track, and regulate, even with a network of spies and police in the city. In this regard, rumors served as one example of the many "weapons of the weak" outlined by James C. Scott in *Domination of the Arts of Resistance*.[46]

Announcing the Pope's Death

To quell the confusion created by rumors, official rites centered on the Capitol and the Vatican proclaimed the pope's death and the end of his reign to the city. The first of these ritual signifiers was the tolling of the Patara bell on the Capitoline Hill. The Patara bell tolled only at certain times of the year, which included not only the pope's death, but also the beginning of Carnival season, the execution of prisoners, and the summoning of the general council of the *Popolo Romano*.[47] By the 16th century fewer executions took place on the Capitol and the general council met less regularly than in the past. Thus, the tolling of the bell at the Capitoline became exclusively associated with the vacant see and the Carnival, and with the atmosphere of festive misrule and license that both events brought to Rome. The cardinal chamberlain generally issued orders that the bell be rung "as a sign of the pope's death."[48] The tolling

45 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:195. Morandi later died in prison from poisoning, most likely the victim of assassination. See also Dooley, *Morandi's Last Prophecy*, pp. 162–79. For earlier papal attempts at banning astrology, see Umberto Baldini, "The Roman Inquisition's Condemnation of Astrology: Antecedents, Reasons and Consequences," in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Gigliola Fragnito (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), pp. 79–110.

46 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 147.

47 Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol*, p. 68; Pietro Romano, *Campane di Roma* (Rome, 1944), pp. 68–70; and Jean Aymon, *Tableau de la cour de Rome* (The Hague, 1707), p. 12.

48 Girolamo Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente della corte di Roma* (Rome, 1765 [1635]), p. 76.

of the Patara bell was then greeted by an undulating echo of all of the city's bells and by salvoes fired from Castel Sant'Angelo.[49] So that no doubts would hang over the veracity of the news, the cardinal chamberlain sent notices to the *Popolo Romano*. The magistrates in turn sent out the *caporioni* and their patrols to march through the streets and quarters of the city to proclaim the pope's death by the beat of drums. Once these ritual displays were seen and heard, the official news of the pope's death was spread throughout Rome. Crowds began to roam the streets, congregating at the Vatican to witness papal interregnal rites, at the city's jails to greet family members and friends soon to be freed, or at the Capitoline Hill to take part in the *Popolo Romano*'s newfound activities. The novelty of the events—especially in cases of long-lived popes—caused Romans to leave their homes to view important events as they unfolded. An anonymous satire written at the time of Alexander VII's death in 1667 read, "At the sound of the big bell the people showed up at the Capitoline, more curious than usual since they had only heard it ring twice in forty-four years."[50] That is, the people had only witnessed the deaths of Urban VIII and Innocent X from 1623 to 1667.

The sounding of the Patara bell at the vacant see was thus a signal for rebellion and disorder. Papal authorities were at times averse to having it rung. Fearing possible trouble, on the night of Clement VIII's death (3 March 1605), his cardinal-nephew, Pietro Aldobrandini "did not want to sound the bell at the Capitol until morning, as is usual, in order to avoid any sudden tumult."[51] Aldobrandini had much to dread, as the ringing of the bell could be used as a call to arms by the *Popolo Romano* and sometimes was rung before the pope had died. This was obviously the case when the new magistrates of the *Popolo Romano* were summoned to the general council before Gregory XIV had actually passed away in October 1591.[52]

The confusion surrounding the pope's death and its announcement—as well as its potential to provoke political unrest—can be seen in the tumult that occurred in Nettuno, a small coastal town in southern Lazio. During Paul IV's war with Spain in the mid-1550s, the rebellious nobleman Ascanio della Corgna seized the town's fortress by having the town's bells rung and riding through the streets, shouting "it's the vacant see."[53] Della Corgna left sixteen of his

49 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 76; and Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, p. 3.

50 BAV, Vat.lat. 9729, "Satira per la morte di Alessandro VII," fol. 295r.

51 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 54, dispatch of 5 March 1605, fol. 7r.

52 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 2 October 1591, fols. 289v–290r.

53 BAV, Urb.lat. 1038, *avviso* of 1 August 1556, fol. 105r.

henchmen at the fortress. These men later excused themselves before the papal governor who later regained the town by claiming that "he had tricked them with his saying it was the vacant see."[54] This was not an isolated episode. On 3 May 1572, while waiting for official news of Pius V's death, the governor of Città di Castello on the Tuscan border heard the city bells announce the pontiff's death. Moments later, the banned nobleman Vincenzo Vitelli, scion of the town's ruling family, rode through the main street, yelling out his family's name. His henchmen soon poured out of their homes and followed him to the Piazza di Vitelli, where his family palace stood. There they staged a demonstration of protest against papal rule, and over the course of the next few days they harassed the governor and his men. Vitelli's men committed several assassinations of their enemies and the governor's *sbirri*.[55]

Back in Rome, the potential for disorder surrounding the announcement of the pope's death was magnified by the *Popolo Romano*'s ancient privilege of freeing prisoners from the city's jails for lesser crimes and civil offenses. While the *caporioni* and their patrols marched through the *rioni* with drums and their neighborhood standards, the *caporioni* of Regola, Ponte, Campitelli, and the Borgo also stopped by the jails of Corte Savella, Tor di Nona, the Capitoline, and the governor of the Borgo, respectively, to free those housed within.[56] Gigli, the *caporione* of Campitelli in the vacant see of 1644, provided an evocative firsthand description of the ritual freeing of the prisoners from the cells of the Capitoline jails. In his diary he wrote of his duties as *caporione* on the day of Urban's death:

> On the twenty-ninth of July, the death of Urban VIII was proclaimed and when the bell of the Capitol was sounded, since I was the *caporione* of Campitelli, the *capotoro* of my *rione* . . . came to my house with many soldiers and with two drums. With these men accompanying me, I went to the Capitol, where there were numerous people. Climbing the stairs of

54 BAV, Urb.lat. 1038, *avviso* of 1 August 1556, fol. 105r.

55 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 150, c. 1, testimony of Governor Bernardino Tempestrio, 8 June 1572, fol. 7v.

56 Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento*, p. 76; Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, p. 232; and Rodocanachi, *Les institutions communales*, p. 243. In 1652, Innocent X ordered the permanent closing of the Corte Savella, replacing it with the Carcere Nuove, the new prisons, on Via Giulia in 1655. The *caporione* of Regola still enjoyed the right of freeing the prisoners in the jails in the Carcere Nuove, since they were located in his *rione*. For a reference of the *caporione* of the Borgo freeing the prisoners in his quarter, see GRS, MS, "Il diario di Gioseffe Gualdi, 1654–55," t. II, fol. 6r. He led fifteen prisoners from the jails of the Borgo during Innocent X's vacant see.

> the Palace of the Senator, I went to the prisons, which I then immediately opened. I had the secret cells and rooms opened, and I had the key given to me. I had all the prisoners who were inside brought before me and with the soldiers and the drums I went outside, followed by all the prisoners, who came one by one. And so that my soldiers could not carry away the rope used to give the *corda*, as is usual, the warden of the prisons gave them a *scudo*. But other times it was custom that the last of the prisoners carried away the *corda*, following the *caporione* to his house. The warden of the prisons, in order to recover it, paid them fourteen *giulii*, which were given to the soldiers of the *caporione*. This was my duty to perform because the Capitol stood in my *rione*. The other *caporioni* who had prisons in their *rioni* also did their duty. Afterwards we met again with the others in the Palace of the Conservators at the council.[57]

It was customary, according to Gigli, that the last of the prisoners follow the *caporione* to his home (which served as the headquarters of his watchmen) with the *corda*, the rope used to give the torture of the *strappado*, which was used both as an interrogation device and, increasingly from the 16th century onward, as a form of punishment for all sorts of petty crimes.[58] The warden of the prisons would then pay the *caporione* fourteen *giulii* to get the *corda* back, and then the *caporione* would distribute the money among his men. In this case, the warden of the Capitoline prisons, fearing a tumult might erupt among the prisoners at the sight of the hated torture device, instead paid the constables a *scudo* (the equivalent of ten *giulii*) in advance so that it would be taken out of public sight. The warden sought to avoid the riots that could occur at the opening of the prisons. In 1585, for example, while the *caporione* of Regola and his patrol were freeing the prisoners in the jails of the Corte Savella, a riot occurred at the sight of the *corda*. Once the last prisoner exited the jail with the *corda*, a crowd composed of prisoners and bystanders rushed him. As its members raced toward the prisoner with the *corda*, they shouted, "Throw it in the river!" Two ringleaders among the rioting prisoners grabbed the rope and led the crowd to the nearby Ponte Sisto. Once on the bridge, they threw it into the Tiber—a symbolic method of effacing the memory of odious objects and people that was common throughout early modern Europe.[59]

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57 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:426.

58 These crimes typically warranted three hoists (*tratti*) with the *corda* in addition to a monetary fine or time as an oarsman in the papal galleys.

59 ASV, Curia Savelli, Investigazioni, b. 57, investigation dated 20 May 1585, n. p. For other examples of this symbolic practice, usually of the remains of dismembered officials and

Elsewhere in the provinces of the Papal States, authorities risked unrest if they administered the *corda* to criminals in public throughout the vacant see. Riots broke out in the cities of Ancona and Todi when papal governors sought to punish wrongdoers with the *corda* throughout Urban VII's vacant see in 1590.[60] In the minds of many papal subjects, not only did the pope's death free them from confinement in the prisons, but it also brought an end to the harsher aspects of justice.

The majority of the prisoners released at the time of the vacant see were thieves, beggars, and petty criminals. A good number of them were insolvent debtors. From the second half of the sixteenth century, prices inflated throughout Italy and poverty gripped Rome. As a consequence, poorer Romans fell into debt and faced imprisonment if they could not repay their loans. According to Jean Delumeau, debtors accounted for half of the prisoners incarcerated in the city's prisons. By the 1580s, at least six percent of the population, which numbered about 100,000 at that time, had spent time in jail for debt. Through charity and papal dispensation, many of these prisoners were eventually freed. Nonetheless, insolvent debtors habitually crowded Roman jails throughout the late 16th century and the 17th century.[61]

The number of prisoners freed by the *Popolo Romano* was not insubstantial. In his study on confraternities and the prisons in Rome, Vincenzo Paglia estimated that the city's main jails housed an average of three hundred men on any given day.[62] This influx of criminals added to the unrest and violence of the vacant see. In addition to these petty criminals, more serious criminals such as murderers, bandits, and heretics, were often accidentally freed by the *caporioni* before the governor of Rome had the opportunity to transfer them to the dungeons of Castel Sant'Angelo. The *caporioni* evidently made no effort to check the status of those they freed.[63] For example, at the announcement of

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tyrants, in early modern France, see William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), p. 254; and Orest Ranum, "The French Ritual of Tyrannicide in the Late Sixteenth Century," *SCJ* 11 (1980), 80–81.

60 For Ancona, see ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 230, c. 1, fols. 1r–45v. For Todi, see ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 244, c. 37, fols. 1086r–1087v and 1092v–1093r.

61 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:497–98. See also Vincenzo Paglia, *"La pietà dei carcerati": Confraternite e società a Roma nei secoli XVI–XVIII* (Rome, 1980), pp. 46–60.

62 Paglia, *La pietà dei carcerati*, pp. 36–41. The Capitoline prisons could hold up to as many as hundred people; see Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol*, p. 161.

63 The liberation from jail did not absolve prisoners of their crimes—especially those imprisoned for murder or heresy. For an example of heretics reluctant to be freed by the *caporioni* due to the danger it posed to their inquisition trials, see Kate Bentz, "Ulisse Aldrovandi, Antiquities, and the Roman Inquisition," *SCJ* 43 (2012), 971–72. More often

Gregory XIII's death on 10 April 1585, thirty-six people awaiting execution before Easter fled from the Tor di Nona because the governor failed to transfer them to Castel Sant'Angelo. Their flight was aided by Giulio Galligano and Leonardo Lazzarini, two prisoners released two weeks before the pope's death.[64] Seven years later, on the first of January 1592, the governor of Rome did not have the time to transport fifteen prisoners condemned to death to Castel Sant'Angelo, and so the *Popolo Romano* accidentally freed them, causing strained relations between the College of Cardinals and the Capitoline officials.[65] A newsletter reported of the incident that the governor was able to transfer the prisoners of the Tor di Nona to the papal dungeons, but that the "*caporione* of Regola, freed all those in Corte Savella, which housed bandits, thieves and others arrested for causing terrible disorders."[66] A week later two of the prisoners who escaped at the opening of the prisons were identified. They were bandits with bounties placed on their heads by the Grand Duke of Tuscany.[67]

The escape of more serious prisoners remained a problem throughout the early modern era. Twenty-nine years later, during the vacant see of Paul V, the Venetian ambassador Girolamo Soranzo wrote to his government that the after the freeing of the prisoners, "all passes with much confusion, the city filling with bandits and kinds of people."[68] Soranzo noted that the cardinals and ambassadors armed their houses, fearful of the burglaries and assaults that these men committed once freed. Newsletters confirmed Soranzo's violent picture. In 1605, several bandits condemned to the galleys escaped at the opening of the prisons. Once freed, they held several customs merchants for a ransom of a thousand *scudi*.[69]

The vacant see was associated with new rules and unaccustomed license. The custom of freeing of the prisoners reflected this newfound liberty of the vacant

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than not, papal police promptly rearrested these "more important prisoners," liberated during the vacant see. For example, see ASR, TCG, Relazioni dei birri, vol. 96, fol. 20r–v, reports of 11 February 1592.

64 BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, *avvisi* of 13 April, fols, 171v and 174r. See the testimony of Giulio Galligano da Velletri and Leonardo Lazzarini da Bologna, ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, fols. 49v–58v.

65 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 4 January 1592, fol. 11r.

66 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 1 January 1592, fol. 2r. The Venetian ambassador Giovanni Moro noted that during the sudden opening of the prisons, "some of the most wick men, worthy of a thousand deaths, escaped"; see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 28, dispatch of 11 January 1592, fol. 328r.

67 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 8 January 1592, fol. 17r.

68 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 83, dispatch of 31 January 1621, fol. 447v.

69 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 26 March 1605, fol. 145v.

see and was engrained in the minds of Romans and papal subjects. In 1605, a prisoner named Luca and his compatriots escaped from the jail of the small town of Nepi in northern Lazio once they heard of the news of Clement VIII's death. Luca plotted his flight on the urging of his mother, who told him that "the pope was dead and that it was the vacant see, therefore he could break out of the prisons and leave because this is what is done in Rome."[70] Although Rome was the only city in the Papal States to free its prisoners at the moment of the pope's death, small towns had evidently heard of the practice.[71] In addition to criminals, other types of "prisoners" saw the vacant see as an opportunity to escape. Upon hearing the news of Sixtus V's death in 1590, the beggars and vagabonds confined in the Ospedale di San Sisto fled the poor hospital. This was quite a flood of people into the streets. In 1582, the beggars numbered 850 souls, and in 1591, a year after Sixtus's death, their numbers had grown to 2000.[72]

For the *Popolo Romano*, the freeing of the prisoners held a different value. Despite the dangers that freeing the prisoners presented to social fabric of Rome, civic magistrates cherished this task as an opportunity to increase their political and social capital. It reflected the magnanimity of the *Popolo Romano* toward the populace as well its temporary jurisdictional ascendancy at the eclipse of papal authority. In ordinary times, only the pope had the ability to free prisoners en masse at Easter and Christmas festivities (demonstrating his role as the forgiving heir of Christ).[73] Now, at the start of the vacant see, the civic magistrates claimed this right, symbolizing their newfound power.

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70 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 552, testimony of his compatriot, Silvestro da Nepi, 21 April 1605, fol. 11v.

71 From the testimony of criminals before the governor's judges, we know that many of those imprisoned in Roman jails hailed from the small towns and villages of the Papal States. For example, Giulio Galligano and his friends, who had escaped during the release of prisoners, all came from the town of Velletri, located south of Rome in the Alban Hills; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, testimony of Giulio Galligano, 29 April 1585.

72 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 466v. For the number of vagabonds in San Sisto, see Eugenio Sonnino, "The Population of Baroque Rome," in van Kessel and Schulte, *Rome/Amsterdam*, p. 55.

73 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, pp. 64–65; and Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol*, p. 160. On the role of the *Popolo Romano* as patrons, see Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 168–75. The only other group that could free prisoners was the Confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato. Since 1549, popes granted the confraternity the ability to free one prisoner on the Feast of the Decollation (August 29); see Camillo Fanucci, *Trattato di tutte l'opere pie dell'alma città di Roma* (Rome, 1601), p. 335.

As the *caporioni* and their patrols marched through the streets announcing the news of the pope's death and opening the prisons, another set of ceremonies were taking place in the Vatican that highlighted the interregnum and the transference of governmental authority to the College of Cardinals. Immediately after the pope's death, his cardinal-nephew and *famiglia* were required to vacate the papal palaces at the Vatican and the Quirinal Hill and to return to their homes in the city. Symbolizing his roles as the provisional leader of Rome and the Papal States during the vacant see, the cardinal chamberlain "took possession of [the Vatican Palace] in the name of the Apostolic Chamber."[74] The chamberlain resided in the pope's apartments until he and the other cardinals entered the conclave after the prescribed nine days of funeral obsequies for the deceased pontiff. At this time, the pope's guard of Swiss soldiers accompanied the chamberlain throughout the Vatican.[75]

A series of private rites that took place at the first meeting of the Congregation of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel further highlighted the pope's death and the end of his reign. In the presence of the cardinals, the two masters of ceremonies, and the clerics of the Apostolic Chamber and other officials of the Roman Curia, the chamberlain removed from the dead pope's finger the *annulus piscatoris*, the ring of the fisherman, which the pope had used to seal bulls and briefs issued in his name. He then smashed the ring into several pieces with a silver hammer. Next, the datary—the curial official who bestowed benefices and marital dispensations—and the secretaries of the other curial offices surrendered to the chamberlain the seals of the deceased pope that gave their documents authority. Again the chamberlain broke the gold molds bearing the pope's seals before the gathered cardinals and officials to underscore the end of the deceased pope's regime and the cessation of his government. The fragments of the ring and seals, worth a hundred *scudi* altogether, were given to the masters of ceremonies as a gift.[76] Papal institutions and offices, except for the Apostolic Chamber headed by the cardinal chamberlain, completely

74 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 74.

75 Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave, concerning the rites and ceremonies observed at the death, election, and coronation of the Pope* (London, 1691), p. 1.

76 On the destruction of the ring and the seals, see Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, pp. 72–73; De Luca, *Il dottor volgare*, vol. IV, bk. 15, ch. 3, p. 480; and Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 231–32. On the gifting of the masters of ceremonies the fragments of the ring and seals, see Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 2; and Gustave Constant, "Les maîtres de cérémonies du XVI^{e} siècle: Leurs *Diaries*," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 23 (1903), 202. Masters of ceremonies kept diaries of the major ceremonial functions of the papal court, including the funeral rites of deceased popes. For the most part they had become formulaic by the mid-16th century. For example, see master of ceremonies Paolo

ceased functioning. During the vacant see, laws could not be promulgated, dispensations could not be granted, and civil and criminal trials could not be conducted. The destruction of the molds not only functioned in a ritual, symbolic sense, but also served a practical function. It prevented them from falling into the hands of the others who could use them to falsify letters in the dead pope's name. The cessation of law was immediate—all briefs the pope had not completed and petitions to the datary not validated at the time of his death were placed into two chests that were sealed for the duration of the vacant see.[77]

Newsletter writers able to get wind of accounts of these private ceremonies were quick to report them to the entire city and beyond.[78] Romans, however, did not need these reports to understand the symbolism of the interregnum. Crowds gathered in St Peter's and near the Vatican witnessed the deceased pope's funeral bier and the mourning clothes of the members of the Curia. By venerable tradition, all of the clerics of the Curia wore black to represent the death of the pope and the lapse in their jurisdiction for the duration of the vacant see. This stood in contrast to the French custom wherein the presidents of the Parlement wore their customary red robes—symbolic dress reflecting royal authority—to show that "justice never dies," that is, the eternal quality of the monarchy.[79] Cardinals and clerics of the Apostolic Chamber, however, did not wear mourning vestments. This symbolized the idea that although the pope had died, the Church as represented by the Sacred College and Apostolic Chamber persisted. The cardinal chamberlain dressed in purple robes, and the cardinals and curialists holding perpetual offices wore dark clothing, but not lugubrious black. The exceptions to this custom were the governor of Rome, relatives of the dead pope, and cardinals nominated by the deceased pope. They were garbed in black to reflect the death of their relative and master and their loss of power with the onset of the vacant see.[80]

Alaleone's laconic account of Gregory XV's funeral ceremonies in 1623; BAV, Vat.lat. 12323, "Diaria Caeremoniarum Pauli Alaleonis," fols. 458r–461r.

77 On the breaking of the seals and the cessation of papal law, see Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 73; and Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 2. For the medieval ceremony, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, p. 119.

78 For example, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 441v; and Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 12 July 1623, fol. 592r. Also see the newsletters in ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi di Roma, t. 9, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 191r–v; and t. 96, *avviso* of 30 July 1644, fol. 203r.

79 Giesey, *Royal Funeral Ceremony*, pp. 56 and 185. In early modern France, only the king, the chancellor, and the four presidents of the Parlement could wear clothing dyed royal red. See also Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, pp. 417–18.

80 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 72; and Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 119–20.

Papal rites thus emphasized the complete lapse of pontifical authority and the temporary ascendancy of the College of Cardinals, led by the cardinal chamberlain. Beginning in the High Middle Ages, jurists and theologians associated the pope with the Roman Curia. Hostiensis (d. 1271), a professor at the University of Paris, coined the maxim "ubi papa, ibi Roma" to emphasize the power of the pope by subjugating all of the cardinals and clerics under his authority.[81] This implied that without the pope, Rome as well as all of Christendom remained leaderless—or headless, to use the corporate terminology favored by the jurists. The death of the Church's head was made even more ominous because popes and their propagandists simultaneously had begun to emphasize his position as the Vicar of Christ (rather than the previously preferred title of Vicar of Peter used since Late Antiquity). The *dignitas*, or symbolic title, of the pope carried weighty implications and could not be transmitted to another human being until the election of his successor. This contrasted with the legal and ritual practices of the French and English monarchies, whose jurists argued that "dignitas non moritur"—colloquially transformed into "le roi ne meurt jamais" and "the king as king never dies."[82] Markedly different from French and English kings, the pope did not have two bodies—physical and metaphysical. Rather, the pope only had a natural body that died with him. As historian Reinhard Elze eloquently put it: "What remained were Christ, the Roman Church, and the Apostolic See, but not the pope."[83]

Papal interregnal rites, like those of similarly elective monarchies of the Republic of Venice and the Commonwealth of Poland, displayed a deep-rooted suspicion of dynastic continuity.[84] Papal families often sought to maintain their authority after the death of their uncle, attempting to hold onto titles and land, and even sway the succeeding election. Consequently, ceremony accentuated their lack of power. The cardinal chamberlain occupied the papal apartments in the Vatican and went about the court with the Swiss Guard. However, the chamberlain and his follow cardinals in the Sacred College were only

81 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, p. 62; the phrase means "where the pope is, there is Rome."

82 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 70–73. For the French and English juridical and ceremonial phrases, see Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, pp. 314–400, particularly pages 383 and 412; and Giesey, *Royal Funeral Ceremony*, p. 117.

83 Elze, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," p. 26.

84 For the interregnal rites in early modern Venice, see Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 263–89. For medieval and early modern Poland, see Gieysztor, "Gesture in the Coronation Ceremonies," pp. 153–55.

temporary substitutes who neither inherited the papal *dignitas* nor exercised full authority. Only the deceased pope's successor could inherit this sovereignty and dignity. Hence another maxim among papal curialists: "Apostolica sedis non moritur. Papa moritur." ("The Apostolic See does not die. The pope dies").[85] The Apostolic See remained vacant but still functioned at a reduced level until another sat on St Peter's throne.

Sic transit gloria mundi: Papal Funeral Rites

In contrast to early modern France, where the monarchy developed elaborate rites to demonstrate the continuity and perpetuity of the French crown, early modern Roman ceremonial dictated that funeral ritual highlight the pope's death and the lapse of authority in his absence.[86] This ceremonial gradually developed in the later Middle Ages as a means of replacing popular rites of inversion that had traditionally announced the pope's death. Throughout the Middle Ages, popes were often abandoned semi-nude in death. Familiars, household servants, and curial officials then stole the dead pope's possessions, down to his funeral robes. Even Innocent III, the most powerful pope of the 13th century, suffered this humiliating fate. This rite highlighted the maxim intoned to each pope on his coronation day: *sic transit gloria mundi*.[87] That is, "thus passes the glory of the world." This phrase as well as the pillaging of the pope's possessions served as a rite of inversion that emphasized the ephemerality of papal power and humbled all those that wore the papal tiara.

Although the rite of papal familiars pillaging the dead pontiff's possessions survived well into the early modern era (as attested by the fears Julius II expressed to his master of ceremonies Paride de Grassi on his deathbed in 1513), the ritual humiliation of his body gradually declined with the creation of the

85 Elze, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," p. 38. Similarly, Venetian officials recognized that, although the doge dies, "the Signoria will never die." See Robert Finlay, "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494–1530)," *SCJ* 30 (1999), 931–44.

86 For the French interregnal ceremonies emphasizing the perpetuity of the crown, see Giesey, *Royal Funeral Ceremony*; and Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, pp. 409–31.

87 On ritual coronation phrase, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 29–39; and Bernhard Schimmelpfennig, "Papal Coronations in Avignon," in Bak, *Coronations*, p. 184. For the abandonment of the pope's body in the Middle Ages, see Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, *Le Chiavi e la Tiara: Immagini e simboli del papato medieval* (Rome, 2005), pp. 100–05; and Elze, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," pp. 21–41. During the coronation ceremony, which dates to the 13th century, bands of flax were burnt to highlight the transience of the pope's life and power.

modern conclave by Gregory X's bull *Ubi periculum* of 1274.[88] This bull established the tradition of sequestering the cardinals in the conclave after nine days of funeral obsequies for the deceased pope.[89] Gregory's primary objective was to free the election from outside influence and to hasten the decision of the cardinals, which could take months and even years to make in the 12th and 13th centuries. The *Novendiales*, as the nine days of funeral obsequies were called, had the secondary effect of symbolically highlighting the pope's death and the vacant see of the Apostolic See. At this time the pope's body was put on display at the Vatican for the entire city and court to view. The *Novendiales* also allowed the College of Cardinals to be seen by the populace before its members entered the conclave on the tenth day of the vacant see. Each morning of the *Novendiales*, the cardinals gathered in the Sistine Chapel to say prayers for the soul of the pope before meeting in congregations that promulgated measures for the defense of the city.[90]

On the first day of the *Novendiales*, the pope's body was prepared for its three days of display in St Peter's Basilica. If the pope had died at the papal palace on the Quirinal Hill—as many early modern popes did, since it was the main residence of the pope's family—the body was transferred to the Vatican in a funeral procession during the night.[91] A vanguard of light horsemen led the mournful procession to clear the way of curious onlookers, eager for a glimpse of the funeral litter. The horsemen were followed by papal grooms bearing torches, Swiss guards carrying the banner of the Apostolic See (folded to represent the vacant see), and the masters of ceremonies on horseback along with several palace servants in red and purple liveries. The funeral litter, located in the symbolic center of the procession, was carried by two white mules. Beginning in the 1540s, Jesuit penitentiaries would stand around the litter, reciting prayers, while Swiss guards armed with halberds marched along both of its sides. Behind the deceased pope trailed an impressive rearguard that included artillery and two companies of horsemen. The first company consisted of lightly armed soldiers carrying banderoles and pistols with their barrels pointed toward the ground (again to represent the vacant see). The second company wore heavier suits of armor and bore flags and swords, likewise pointed to the ground. Musicians rounded out the funeral procession, playing a dirge composed of muted trumpets and discordant drums. The message was

88 See Elze,"*Sic transit gloria mundi*," p. 29; and Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, p. 127.

89 Spinelli, *La vacanza*, pp. 104–30.

90 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, p. 146. See also Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 3.

91 For the funeral procession, see Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, pp. 80–83.

clear to those who saw the procession and its symbols and heard its somber intonations: the pope's reign had ended.

Once at the Vatican the masters of ceremonies prepared the body for its presentation in St Peter's. The masters of ceremonies washed the body in a mixture of herbs and white wine and had professional apothecaries embalm the body so that its face would not putrefy for the remaining eight days of the *Novendiales*. Then, they dressed it in red robes and white sandals (if the pope had been a member of a religious order, these vestments were placed over his habit).[92] After embalming and dressing the body a procession of cardinals and curial officials took it to St Peter's and placed it on a funeral bier called the *castrum doloris*—the fortress of sorrow—so called because the edifice, pyramidal in shape, resembled a castle. Rather than the customary standards bearing the papal coat-of-arms, masters of ceremonies placed four black banners on top of the monument and surrounded the body with torches and candles on silver candleholders. A painting of a skull and bones rested at the base of the bier and served as a *memento mori*. This contrasted sharply with the signs of the pope's former power that were placed inside the coffin: a silver cross lay on his breast and two cardinal's hats rested at his feet, "representing his spiritual and temporal authority."[93] The only reference to the pope's past life as an individual was the carving of his family's arms along with the papal insignia on the side of the bier. The body was protected by a grating that left only its feet exposed. Swiss guards watched the body "in order to quell disorders that could occur due to the throng of people that flocked" to St Peter's to view it.[94]

The papal funeral rites accorded no role for the majority of Romans. The exception to this was the ritual display of the deceased pontiff's body and the rite of kissing his foot. For three days the pope's body was placed on display at St Peter's for the piety of the faithful. Throughout these three days, pilgrims and local Romans inundated St Peter's and its environs, pushing and shoving to get a glimpse of the pope and to kiss his slippered right foot. Newsletters and ambassador dispatches, using terms like "flock" and "crowds," report that

92 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 115–16 and 134–35. Also see BAV, Vat.lat. 12323, "Diaria Caeremoniarum," fols. 458v–459r.

93 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 85; and Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 116–17. Quote from Gregorio Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 10. See also the BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 9 December 1565, fol. 152r–v, for a description of Pius IV's funeral bier.

94 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 85. The Swiss guards could be a source of disorder. In 1605, the Sacred College thought it prudent to bolster the watch over the pope's body with some Corsican soldiers, which led to a fight between the two groups. One of the Corsicans was wounded and priests were summoned to rebless St Peter's; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 5 March 1605, fol. 102v.

thousands of people competed for a chance to see the dead pope. The crowd's behavior shows that the pope's body, despite the loss of its *dignitas*, was viewed by commoners and elites alike as a holy object, a divine intercessor between this world and Christ. This can be seen in an account of the display of Paul III's body in 1549. The Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo recalled in a dispatch to the Senate that

> The body was taken into Christ's Chapel at St. Peter's and although it rained hard, there was such a crowd of people of all sorts to kiss his feet, that they stood outside the grating, crying *peccavi mea culpa*, and making those within touch the corpse on their behalf, a thing unheard of. This continued throughout yesterday.[95]

The rite of kissing the pope's foot was the last demonstration of respect for his sacral power, but it was especially important for the people. As Dandolo's report indicates, the body still retained its numinous aura associated with the pope's former position as the Vicar of Christ.

The behavior of the crowd resembled that of devotees before the wonder-working images of the Madonna and saints found in sanctuaries throughout Catholic Italy and Europe. Pilgrims at these sanctuaries threw themselves to the ground and shouted to get the attention of the Madonna or the saint, who as a divine patron would bestow her or his aid to them or intercede on their behalf before Christ.[96] Likewise, the crowds waiting to kiss the pope's feet shouted, "peccavi, mea culpa" ("I have sinned, it's my fault."), an abridgement of the prayer Confiteor said at mass and before receiving extreme unction. Traditionally, when the faithful intoned this prayer they struck their breasts three times at the utterance of the phrase "mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa." It is obvious that they wanted the pope to intercede on their behalf in the next world. If they could not touch the pope, the next best thing would be to gain his attention by making a racket.

All popes, even the most worldly and severe, were accorded this veneration in death. Paul III, although a reforming pope, was known for his nepotism and self-aggrandizement. However, the people of Rome and faithful pilgrims venerated his body as an intermediary between heaven and earth. He was not

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95 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 13 November 1549, in *CSP* (1534–54), ed. Rawdon Brown (1873; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1970), 5:275.

96 Michael P. Carroll, *Veiled Threats: The Logic of Popular Catholicism in Italy* (Baltimore, 1996), pp. 40–44. On saints as divine patrons, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).

unique in this treatment of his body. Pius V is a case in point. Although sainted two centuries after his death, among the faithful he had a mixed reputation. Popular due to his successful organization of the Victory at Lepanto, he was also known as a stern pope who sought to regulate the mores of the populace. Yet, his body, too, was accorded veneration in death. The *vita* commissioned by Pope Sixtus V in 1587 recounts the vivid scene surrounding the body of Pius:

> [The corpse of Pius V] was not only visited by the people of Rome, who wept copiously, with men and women racing to kiss his feet, but also gathered at the bier almost all the inhabitants of the surrounding towns in these four days. They stood there to honor the body, and out of great devotion sought to touch it with prayer beads and rosaries, tearing from it bits of cloth, and even pulling hair from its beard in order to show their devotion. Many feared that the crowd might also rend the flesh from the body since it was referred by those present as soft, tractable and full of color to a point as if it were a living man. This was said to be a great sign of sanctity. Now because it did not have any injuries on the body due to such violence, there was in one's line of sight added members of the guard and other soldiers. And it was placed in the chapel of St. Thomas, where one foot was left sticking out of the railing, allowing it to be kissed by the multitude, which with all that still cut the soles from the shoes.[97]

The author of the *vita*, Girolamo Catena, even had a group of prostitutes, eager for revenge against the dead pope who punished them for "their dishonest life," come to chapel to celebrate Pius's death, "for it appeared to them that the reign of terror had ended, and that they might now be able to live freely." According to the hagiographer, once they saw Pius's body, instead of embracing the freedom of the vacant see, they fell to their knees and began to kiss his feet while crying out their sins.

Another account of this scene by the Spaniard Antonio de Fuenmayor, written for Pius's majordomo in 1594, repeated many of the same details of the earlier *vita*: the great devotion and piety of the people, the touching of the body with rosaries and images, the rending of its clothing and hair, and its pristine condition. Fuenmayor added that they "cried out their sins, beseeching Pius as an intercessor to seek forgiveness."[98] Of course, both accounts of the people's actions are hagiographical in tone, written several years after Pius's death as

97 Girolamo Catena, *Vita del gloriossimo Papa Pio Quinto* (Mantua, 1587), pp. 159–60.

98 Antonio de Fuenmayor, *Vida y hechos de Pío v*, ed. Lorenzo Riber (Madrid, 1594; repr. 1953), pp. 241–43; 243.

part of Sixtus V's strategy of sanctifying him.[99] As such, some of the details may be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the general details hold true for all popes—the emotion, the crowds gathered to kiss his foot, and the belief that the pope's body had a connection between the earthly and heavenly worlds.

Paul III and Pius V are just two examples of this ritual phenomenon. However, evidence from newsletters indicates that the veneration of the papal corpse was a regular occurrence at the death of popes, no matter how loved or hated they were in life. For example, a newsletter of 1605 reported that at the death of Clement VIII a crush of pilgrims waited outside St Peter's, preventing the College of Cardinals from meeting until the evening.[100] A little more than a month later, at the death of the short-lived pope Leo XI, "an infinite number of people competed to kiss the pope's foot."[101] Romans and pilgrims even came in great numbers to adore the feet of unpopular popes, such as Gregory XV (1623) and Urban VIII (1644), both of whom had earned the ire of the populace through their many taxes on bread and other foodstuffs.[102] The actions of the crowd show that, despite the funeral rites emphasizing the death of the pope and the end of his governance, the people had yet to sever the bonds that connected them to their deceased ruler. In death, the pope was now a divine intercessor—a true *pontifex*, or bride-maker, for his living subjects.[103]

Paradoxically, in addition to veneration, popes could also suffer the censure of their subjects in death. Newsletter writers and libertines wrote invectives

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99 On papal efforts in promoting the cult of Pius V and his sanctification process, see Pamela M. Jones, "The Pope as Saint: Pius V in the Eyes of Sixtus V and Clement XI," in *The Papacy since 1500: From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor*, eds. James Corkery and Thomas Worcester (Cambridge, Eng., 2010), pp. 47–68; and Florence Buttay, "La mort du pape entre Renaissance et Contre-Réforme: Les transformations de l'image du Souverain Pontife et ses implications (fin XV^e^–fin XVI^e^ siècle)," *Revue Historique* 305 (2003), 89–91.

100 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 5 March 1605, fol. 101v.

101 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 30 April 1605, fol. 224r.

102 For Gregory XV, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 12 July 1623, fol. 528v, which reported that, "as usual, a great number of people gathered there [i.e. at St Peter's] to kiss his foot" and ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi di Roma, t. 9, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 191v. For Urban VIII, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi di Roma, t. 96, *avviso* of 6 August 1644, fol. 206r, which stated "the people flocked there in great numbers to be able to kiss the [pope's] foot."

103 For the meaning and etymology of the term *pontifex*, see Judith P. Hallet, "'Over Troubled Waters': The Meaning of the Title *Pontifex*," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), 219–27. Early modern popes, either living or dead, never developed around them the miracle-working powers that contemporary English and French kings claimed. See Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Monarchy and Miracles in France and England*, trans. J.E. Anderson (London, 1973); and Monod, *Power of Kings*, pp. 40–41, 68–69, and 71–72.

against their reputation, and Romans of all ranks took part in riots against their memorials. This paradox of expressed love and hate for dead pope was tied to what Paolo Prodi has called the "double soul" of the early modern pope: as the Vicar of Christ, he was the spiritual head of the Catholic Church, and as the prince of the Papal States, he was the secular head of one of the largest independent states in the Italian peninsula.[104] Romans criticized his secular soul while venerating his spiritual soul. Of all the early modern popes, only Paul IV completely lost the aura of sanctity that surrounded his body. After his death in 1559, masters of ceremonies had his body quickly entered in St Peter's rather than displaying it for the customary three days of public veneration "out of fear that the people would commit some outrage against it."[105]

The rite of venerating the pope's body was not the only popular ritual associated with papal funeral obsequies. Household servants and curial officials also refused to sever the ties with their former lords so quickly. These familiars asserted ownership over personal possessions of the dead popes. For example, the pope's barber claimed the razor and basin he had used to shave the deceased's beard and head before his burial, and the masters of ceremonies took the bedding of their former master. Beginning in the 13th century, popes arranged before their death to give these attendants money in lieu of their personal objects in order to prevent pillaging: the barber received several *scudi* and the masters of ceremonies the remnants of the golden *annulus pescatoris* molds of the papal seals.[106] Nevertheless, the pillaging of the personal effects of the pope continued until the papacy's adoption of a modern, depersonalized bureaucracy in the 19th century. As late as 1655, as Innocent X lay dying, attendants had already taken his favorite bowl, and the majordomo of the palace had stolen a ring from his finger.[107]

Reinhard Elze has argued that papal familiars sought these items as relics. However, in all likelihood these pillages represented the last bit of income for many of these servants and attendants.[108] With the exception of a few officials, such as the masters of ceremonies, the election of a pope saw the change

104 Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 17–58. See chapter 5 of this study for protests against dead popes during the vacant see.

105 Letter of the French ambassador Babon d'Angoulême to Cardinal Charles de Guise, 15 September 1559, in *Lettres et memoires d'estat, des roys, princes, ambassadeurs et autres ministres, sous les regnes de François I, Henry II, & Henry III* (Blois, 1666), 2:829.

106 Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, p. 117; and Constant, "Les maîtres de cérémonies," pp. 202–03.

107 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 136, dispatch of 5 January 1655, fol. 606r.

108 Elze, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," p. 26.

of the entire papal household and the creation of a new patronage network. The new pope and his family often favored fellow countrymen when allocating positions within the household and the curia. Thus, in the case of papal familiars, the theft of the papal household goods and treasures emphasized both the continuation and the severance of the personal bonds with their deceased master.

The funeral obsequies continued for another six days after the public display of the pope's body. The cardinals continued to hold funeral masses each morning for the deceased pope. On the last day of the *Novendiales*, a priest versed in humanism gave a eulogy of the pope. After the funeral sermon, five cardinals led by the chamberlain celebrated mass, aspersed the body with holy water, and lit censors filled with incense. Then, the body was entered in a chapel that had been arranged to hold his tomb before his death.[109] With the burial, Romans turned their collective attention to the election of the next pope, an event which, as we shall see, generated its own set of rumors and rituals.

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109 Lunadoro, *Lo stato presente*, p. 94; and Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 4.

CHAPTER 3

Fear and Loathing in the Vacant See

In a report to the Venetian Senate in 1560, the ambassador Alvise Mocenigo described the violence that racked Rome in the aftermath of Paul IV's death. With the coming of the vacant see of 1559, the ambassador wrote "there converged on the city so many lowlifes, bandits and outlaws for different reasons that one did not hear other than the murders of this or that person."[1] In his description of the violence, Mocenigo referenced a very real place, the Bosco di Baccano, a forest near the Lago di Bracciano and the Via Cassia that served as a hideaway for bandits, murderers, and highwaymen.[2] Almost a century later, the Savoyard ambassador Desiderio Paletti evoked the atmosphere of fear that blanketed Rome after the death of Urban VIII. He wrote to the duke that "everyone fears a sack because of the numerous soldiers and bandits that the Colonna, Orsini, and other potentates bring into the city."[3] Vacant sees between these two points (1559 and 1644) regularly saw hordes of soldiers, bandits, and vagabonds descend on Rome in search of work as guards for the conclave or for individual nobles and ecclesiastics. These men—poor, desperate, and violent—opportunistically took advantage of the chaos that the vacant see brought. Thus, the very men hired to provide peace and tranquility were paradoxically the greatest sources of disorder and violence.

This chapter highlights the inherent weaknesses of the papal regime in Rome that the vacant see exacerbated. Violence dramatically surged during the vacant see as Romans took advantage of the pope's death and the slumber of his laws to commit thefts, murders, and assassinations. Lacking an adequate army, the College of Cardinals had to import fighting men from the immediate hinterlands and from Umbria and the Marches to quell this violence. However, these men—often a mix of professional soldiers, veterans, peasants, and

1 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38.

2 On the Bosco di Baccano, see Leandro Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta Italia di Fra Leandro Alberti* (Bologna, 1550), p. 68.

3 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 54, letter of Don Desiderio Paletti to the duke of Savoy, 5 August 1644, n. p. On the memory that the violence of the Sack of 1527 imprinted on contemporaries, see Kenneth Gouwens, *Remembering the Renaissance: Humanist Narratives of the Sack of Rome* (Leiden, 1998); and Jessica Goethals, "Vanquished Bodies, Weaponized Words: Pietro Aretino's Conflciting Portraits of the Sexes and the Sack of Rome," *I Tatti: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014), 55–78.

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improverished journeymen—magnified the violence with their sheer numbers. Papal authorities in Rome thus lacked the ability to control this violence, thus showing that Rome had serious issues over the monopoly of violence.

The regular occurrence of the vacant see in the early modern era consistently placed breaks on the papacy's centralizing schemes. Between 1559 and 1655, the papacy experienced fourteen vacant sees; 1590 and 1605 alone saw two popes die within months of each other. No other state in the early modern world saw such frequent interregna. Nor did any other state experience the levels of violence that Rome did during the vacant see. Possessing only a tentative monopoly over violence, the vacant see laid bare the institutional fragilities of the papacy and its government. To invoke some of the metaphors employed by resident ambassadors: without the pope, Rome became an armed camp, a battlefield, and a bandit lair. Although hyperbolic in tone, these accounts rung true. During the back-to-back vacant sees of the autumn of 1590, bandits nearly took control of the highways leading to Rome, provoking an intense crisis over the city.

The Surge in Violence

Throughout the early modern era, Rome ably enjoyed a reputation as a city of quarrelsome men and women whose penchant for vengeance escalated into brawls, tumults, and murders. The city's elite, especially members of its ancient nobility, strutted through the streets in armed retinues that frequently clashed. Pugnacious youths from small towns in the Papal States and neighboring states staffed these retinues. Adding to this violent bunch were the servants and supporters of the ambassadors resident to the papal court—particularly France and Spain—who tussled with rivals from different factions, playing out their state's politics in the city. The countryside around Rome, the Campagna, fared no better. Bandits and highwaymen roamed the roads, plundering travelers, pilgrims, and merchants. All in all, Rome and its hinterlands presented a social landscape fraught with turbulence and crime throughout the early modern era.[4]

4 For violence in Rome, Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*; and Fosi, *Papal Justice*. For the violence of the Roman nobles, see Peter Blastenbrei, "La quadratura del cerchio: Il bargello di Roma nella crisi sociale tardo cinquecentesca," *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storia* 1 (1993), 5–37; and Fosi, "Signori e tribunali," pp. 214–30. For a firsthand accout of the violence of nobles and ambassadors in the 17th century, see the diary of the governor of Rome, Giovanni Battista Spada, *Racconto delle cose più considerabili che sono occorse nel governo di Roma di Giovanni Battista Spada*, ed. Maria Teresa Bonadonna Rosso (Rome, 2004). For the problem of banditry

Despite the centralizing efforts of reform-minded popes, such as Pius V, Sixtus V, and Clement VIII, the early modern papacy clearly did not have a firm grip on the monopoly of violence, even at its very capital.[5] This is attested by the number of violent altercations that occurred daily in the late 16th century. Peter Blastenbrei, using the reports filed by the city's barbers and surgeons with the officials of the *Tribunale del Governatore* of Rome, found that an average of 1.8 violent attacks occurred each day from 1560 to 1585.[6] Police action did not solve the problem: the chief papal police forces, those of the tribunals of the governor and senator of Rome, lacked both the manpower and the ability to curtail the ubiquitous violence. The city's largest police force, the governor's tribunal, numbered fewer than a hundred men throughout the early modern era. Although heavily armed, the *sbirri* lacked discipline and often came from the very ranks of the criminals whom they were meant to monitor. The senator's police force counted fewer than ten *sbirri*.[7] To make up for these deficiencies, popes relied on a mixture of propaganda and public executions to project the strength of their judicial authority. Sixtus V, for example, not only employed an art program to broadcast forcefully his justice throughout Rome and the Papal States, but also ruthlessly sought to extirpate banditry and all sorts of crimes. In the first year of his pontificate, the number of capital sentences and public executions shot up from 54 to 97.[8] These rude palliatives, however, did nothing to stop the omnipresent violence and criminality of the era.

The quotidian picture of Roman society was thus quite grim. However, the vacant see, with its cessation of papal authority, intensified the level of violence in the city. Contemporary accounts reveal the surge in violence at the onset of the vacant see. The Venetian ambassador Mocenigo reported, within a few days of Paul IV's death in August 1559, that several hundred murders had occurred.[9] The Mantuan ambassador Emilio Stenghali also wrote of the

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in the early modern Papal States, see Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:529–66; and Irene Polverini Fosi, *La società violenta: Il banditismo nello Stato pontificio nella seconda metà del Cinquecento* (Rome, 1985).

5 Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 99–104. See also Delumeau, "Le progrès," pp. 399–410, and Prodi, *The Papal Prince*.

6 Blastenbrei, *Kriminaltiät*, pp. 60–65.

7 Blastrenbrei, "La quadratura del cerchio," pp. 9–10; and Steven Hughes, "Fear and Loathing in Bologna and Rome: The Papal Police in Perspective," *Journal of Social History* 21 (1987), 97–116.

8 Fosi, "Justice and Its Image," pp. 75–96. For the number of executions during the first part of Sixtus's pontificate, see Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*, p. 301.

9 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38. For another example of the omnipresent violence of the vacant see of 1559, see Letter of Giovanni Thomasso Vertua to Signor Count Brunoro de Gambara of 16 September 1559 in Roberto Rezzaghi, "Cronaca di un conclave: L'elezione di Pio IV (1559)," *Salesianum* 48 (1986), 559.

violence of Paul's vacant see. Comparing it to other vacant sees, he informed the duke

> Here one does not walk about if not armed. One does not hear other than fights and such a great number of people were wounded and killed that this vacant see has proven to be from the beginning more turbulent than any other in last fifty years.[10]

These examples all come from one vacant see; one that was marked by riots against the late, much hated Paul IV. Even at less tumultuous interregna, violence reigned as Romans took advantage of the opportunities that the vacant see offered. Giacinto Gigli recored this detailed description of the violence that took place after Gregory XV's death in 1623:

> Meanwhile this vacant see was very noteworthy for the great disorders that were committed, especially in Rome, which no one living has remembered ever seeing in a similar time. There does not pass a day without many fights, murders, treacheries, and the discovery of many slain men and women in various places. Many were found headless and others were similarly gathered headless who had been thrown into the Tiber. Many houses were broken into and wickedly robbed at night: doors were forced open, women raped, others killed, others abducted, so that many maidens were shamed, raped and kidnapped.[11]

These two vacant sees do not tell the entire story. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, diarists, ambassadors, and especially newsletter writers reported that the vacant see saw a gluttony of violence throughout the city.[12] Yet can

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10 ASM, Carteggio deli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of 21 August 1559, fol. 664v.

11 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:124–25. The Tuscan ambassador Curtio Picchea wrote to the Grand Duke of the vacant see of 1644 that "it could not get worse," before listing the same litany of crimes that Gigli had recorded in his diary; see ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3338, letter of 4 August 1623, fol. 525v. The Venetian ambassadors Renier Zen and Girolamo Soranzo also noted the increase in murders during this vacant see; see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 88, dispatch of 15 July 1623, fol. 484r.

12 For the vacant see of 1585, see Bruno Gatta, "Il diario di Lelio Dalla Valle (1581–1586)," in *ASRSP* 105 (1982), 25; and BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of 17 April 1585, fol. 177r. For 1605, ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, f. 54, dispatch of 19 March 1605, fol. 49r. A month and a half later, during the vacant see of Clement's successor, Leo XI, newsletter writers noted that among the populace there were "some fights and murders" and "in the

the accounts of diarists, ambassadors, and newsletter writers accurately attest to the number of brawls and murders that took place during the vacant see? Many of these reports could use the commonplace stereotypes and metaphors in describing violence committed in the vacant see. Moreover, newsletter writers liked to stoke the fires of fear with accounts of heightened levels of violence, often as a way to critique the dead pope or the cardinals in the conclave.[13] They kept minute track of the murders that took place, salaciously discussing their lurid details for the edification of their readers.[14]

In spite of the fear-mongering of the newsletter writers, criminal records of the governor's tribunal verify the spike in violence in the vacant see. Specifically, the *relazioni dei medici et barbieri* demonstrate this violent outpouring. These *relazioni* were obligatory reports of all suspicious wounds that barbers, surgeons, and doctors registered with the governor's tribunal within one day of treating patients. The papacy, like many other Italian states, began to use the reluctant barbers and doctors as denouncers of crimes starting from the 1530s.[15] Although laconic compared to the *processi* and *costituti*, the *relazioni* give brief reports of the types of injuries and wounds Romans suffered in brawls and attacks, making them ideal for a quantifiable examination of violence.

Notwithstanding the temporary cessation of the governor's tribunal, the Sacred College issued decrees forcing barbers and surgeons to report all suspicious wounds to its notaries under the penalty of a double fine.[16] Unfortunately,

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time of the death of Pope Leo there have been committed a good number of murders"; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 7 May 1605, fol. 239r, and ASV, Segretario di stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of 4 May 1605, fol. 8r.

13 For ability of the news and rumors to stir up fears, see Jean Delumeau, *Peur en Occident* (*XIV^e–XVIII^e siècles*): *Une cité assiégée* (Paris, 1978), pp. 171–74; and Claude Gauvard, "Fear of Crime in Late Medieval France," in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis, 1999), pp. 1–48.

14 See BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 9 March 1605, fols. 110r–111r; and GRI, MS, "Il Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi, 1654–1655," t. II, fol. 5r. Gualdi was a newsletter writer.

15 For a study of the early modern state's employment of medical professionals in the surveilliance of crimes, see Alessandro Pastore, *Il medico in tribunale: La perizia medica nella procedura penale d'antico regime* (*secoli XVI–XVIII*) (Bellinzona, 2004). Pastore studies the cities of Bologna, Lucca, Venice, and Verona, as well as the towns of northern Lombardy. He provides statistics for the number of daily woundings in 17th-century Lucca, which for a small town neverthless had the high rates of 0.43 and 1.15 reports of violent wounds a day in 1600 and 1630, repsectively; see p. 193. For Rome, see Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*, pp. 39–42 and 51–71, esp. 60–65.

16 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 105C, *bando* of 15 March 1555, p. 8; ASR, Bandi, vol. 5, *bando* of 2 May 1572; Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 28 August 1590, p. 211; *bando* of 5 March 1605,

for the period under investigation (1559–1655), only the registers for the vacant sees of 1572 and 1644 have survived. Nevertheless, they confirm that the vacant see was truly a violent moment in the life of the city. The two surviving registers provide a useful contrast that reveals that the vacant see was brutally violent, regardless of whether it experienced any heated demonstrations, like that of 1559, against the dead pope and his family. The thirteen-day vacant see of Pius V, one of the more peaceful in this period, saw 114 violent injuries, or 8.8 injuries a day.[17] Seventy-two years later, the vacant see continued to be a time of violence: the 48-day vacant see of Urban VIII (1644) witnessed 394 violent injuries that were reported to the governor's tribunal, about 8.2 violent acts a day.[18] Romans must have been acclimated to certain levels of violence at the time of the vacant see. The civic magistrate Gigli matter-of-factly recored in his diary that in the days following Urban's death "there were committed several murders."[19]

These are remarkable figures: they show that violence consisently spiked during the vacant see more than five times the usual rate of 1.8 violent alteractons that Blastenbrei calculated for the *sede piena*. Moreover, they give credence to Mocenigo's assertion that hundreds of murders took place at Paul IV's death, or the agent of the Count of Gambara's somewhat exaggerated claim that more than five hundred deaths had been registered in the criminal tribunals of the governor and the Capitol almost two months into the same vacant see.[20]

The violence continued and even increased once the cardinals gathered in the conclave, which usually occurred nine days or more after the pope's death.

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p. 212; *bando* of 30 January 1621, p. 213; *bando* of 9 July 1623, p. 214; *bando* of 31 July 1644, p. 215; and *bando* of 9 Janaury 1655, p. 217.

17 ASR, TCG, Relazioni dei medici et barbieri, vol. 13 (1571–74), fols. 127r–136r: reports from 1 May to 13 May 1572. Blastenbrei also came up with the same figure, although if one included the reports of 14 May 1572 (since the barbers had one day to register their reports), the figure rises to 120 violent crimes for the period of the vacant see. See Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*, pp. 59–60.

18 ASR, TCG, Relazioni dei medici et barbieri, vol. 73, n. p., reports from 29 July to 15 September 1644.

19 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:427. Gigli also commented, rather causally, that after the death of the popular pope, Paul V, "the entire city stirred," an obvious reference to the proclivity of Romans for attacking each other during the vacant see rather than staging a revolt, since no other sources make reference to any manifestations against the popular Borghese pope. See Gigli, *Diario*, 1:80.

20 For this account, see the letter of Giovanni Vertua of 7 October 1559 to Count Brunoro de Gambara in Rezzaghi, "Una cronaca di conclave," p. 565.

This made sense, as the cardinals, although acting as regents in charge of the peace, were often distracted by the requirement to elect the new pope. The Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Priuli was surprised at how few murders took place on the beginning of the vacant see of 1585. He surmised that "the sudden death of the pope was the cause," but prophesied that "if the conclave went longer than usual there could well happen many evils."[21]

Contemporaries also feared that the violence would only continue with a long conclave. A newsletter of 23 September 1559 expressed the desire that the cardinals hasten the election of a new pope "because the business of the city goes badly and with little governance, resulting day and night in many assassinations and murders."[22] After sketching an outline of the violent landscape of Rome after Gregory XV's death in 1623, Gigli continued,

> in sum, wickedness thus kept growing day by day so that if the creation of the new pope is prolonged, as it appears will happen on account of the discords among the cardinals, it is feared that much stranger and more serious troubles will occur.[23]

The *relazioni dei medici* demonstrate that violence continued unabated while the cardinals debated in the conclave; the reports for the vacant see of 1644 reveal that some of the highest murder rates occurred in the thick of the conclave. On the third, seventh, eighth and sixteenth days of the conclave the reports of violent injuries reached the incredible rates, respectively, of 12, 15, 16, and 16 a day.[24]

The vacant see in Rome thus witnessed a consistent surge in violence, which was not connected to highly politicized vacant sees, such as those of 1559 and 1644. Even a "quiet vacant see," as newsletters described the vacant see of 1572, still produced extraordinary levels of violence. With its 8.2 violent crimes per day, the vacant see of 1572 demonstrates that Romans saw the interrgum as the optimal time to pursue their violent desires.

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21 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 19, dispatch of 12 April 1585, fol. 100r.

22 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 23 September 1559, fol. 85r.

23 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:125.

24 ASR, TCG, Relazioni dei medici et barbieri, vol. 73, n. p.

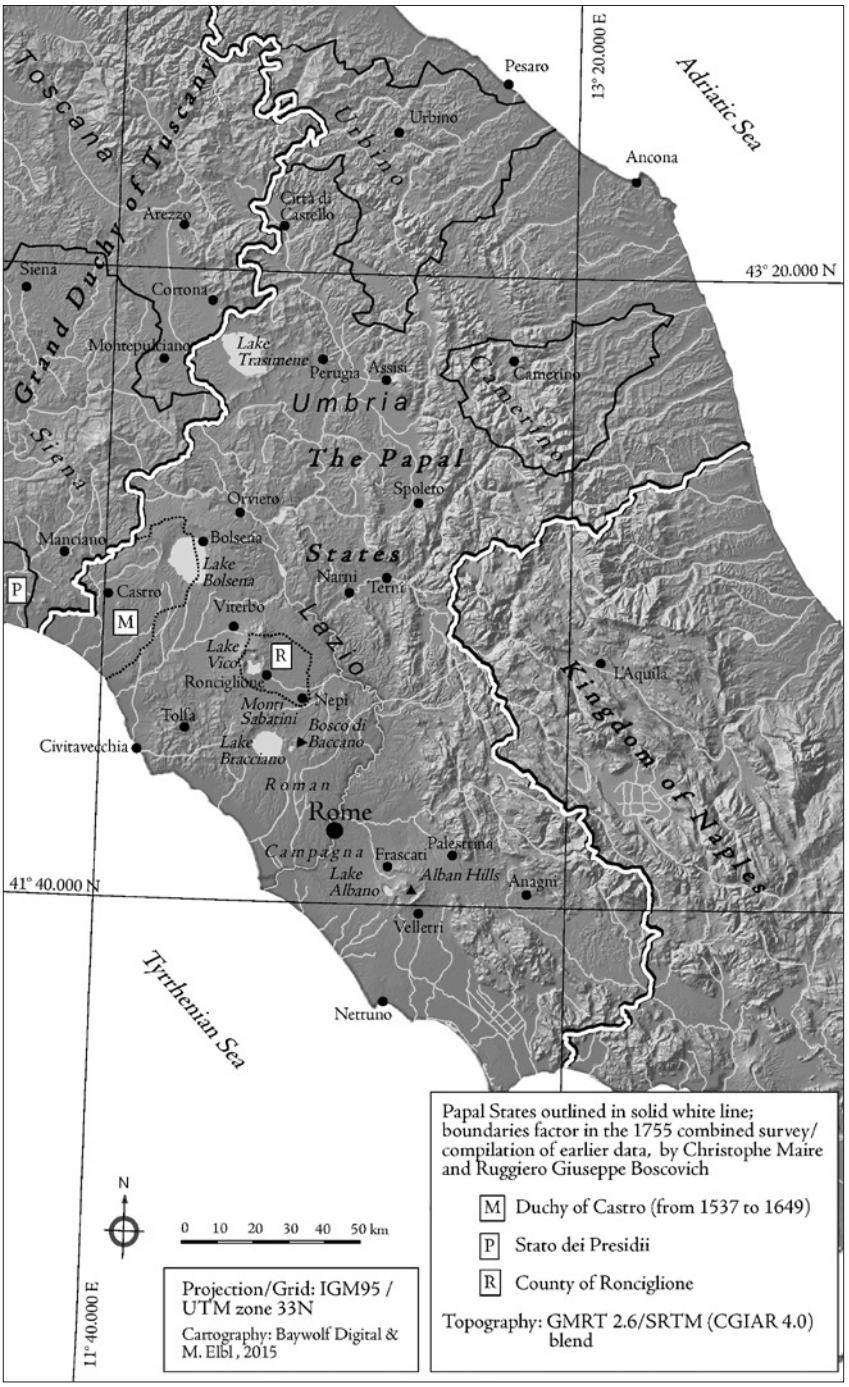

ILLUSTRATION 4 *Map of Rome, Lazio, and Umbria.*

A City of Soldiers

The intensification of violence in the vacant see made it necessary for the College of Cardinals to have the general of the Holy Church increase the scanty forces guarding the city and the conclave. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the pope only kept two hundred Swiss footmen and two companies of light horsemen, usually from Albania, as permanent guards of the Vatican Palace and the city. A company of light horsemen as well as a company of Corsican infantry patrolled the Campagna. This latter force could be augmented, and often was, to fight the inveterate banditry in the Roman countryside.[25] Throughout the Papal States the papacy relied on local governments to defend their own cities and only stationed large numbers of troops at the important garrisons of Civitavecchia in Lazio, Castelfranco in Emilia, and, after 1598, Castello Estenese in Ferrara. The majority of the papacy's 8000 to 10,000 soldiers were quartered at these posts as well as at the papal enclaves of Avignon and Benevento.[26] The Venetian ambassador Paolo Paruta, unimpressed with papal defenses, reasoned that the papal authorities kept the troops' numbers to a minimum because "the memories of the terrible sack of Rome in the pontificate of Clement VII and the threat [of another sack] that almost happened in the pontificate of Paul IV were not very distant."[27] The papacy's fear of soldiers was magnified by the vacant see when, out of necessity, Rome became an armed camp.

During the vacant see, as we have seen, the civic militia of the *Popolo Romano* took over policing the city, and the four companies of the marshal of the conclave guarded the conclave. Yet these forces were not enough. The general of the Holy Church relied on local reserves from the provinces as well as Corsican mercenaries to watch the city. These could be quite considerable.

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25 Andrea Da Mosto, "Ordinamenti militari delle soldatesche dello Stato Romano nel secolo XVI," *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 6 (1904), 89–91; and Georg Lutz, "Da Päpstliche Heer im Jahre 1667: Apostolische Kammer und Nepotismus, Römisches Militärbudget in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 14 (1976), 183–85. See also the reports of the Venetian ambassadors Paolo Paruta of 1595 and Giovanni Dolfin of 1598 in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasaciatori*, ser. II, 4:404 and 4:466.

26 Da Mosto, "Ordinamenti militari delle soldatesche," p. 73; Lutz, "Das Päpstliche Heer im Jahre 1667," pp. 190–98; and "Relazioni di Roma di Paolo Paruta, 1595," in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:384. For the weakness of the papal army in the 15th century, see Michael Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy* (Totowa, NJ, 1974), p. 256.

27 "Relazione di Paolo Paruta," in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:384.

The Sacred College raised 7000 soldiers for Paul III's vacant see in 1549.[28] For the most part, however, the troops recruited for the vacant see numbered between 2000 and 3000 men. With Rome's population at 100,000 between 1592 and 1630, this influx of soldiers was not inconsequential.[29]

Companies of soldiers generally came from the Patrimony (northern Lazio) and Umbria, regions that were only a day or two away from Rome. Accordingly, they could hastily march to the city after the pope's death. Recruiting soldiers, however, could take some time, since this duty fell on captains, often local potentates and mercernaries, who had to scour the towns and surrounding countryside. On 14 April 1585, four days after the death of Gregory XIII, the Perugian magnate Ulisse Piccini began to raise a company of soldiers for the College of Cardinals. He announced the call for men by having a crier beat a drum throughout the city of Perugia and nearby villages. The same day other Perugian captains from prominent local families—Signorello Signorelli, Cesare Monte Mellino, Ettore Graziani, and Fabio Bagliani, among others—also raised companies that headed for Rome. The captains either collected their

28 "Relazione di Matteo Dandolo, 1551" in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 3:345; the ambassador cites 7000 soldiers for 1549, but he notes they progressively diminished toward the end of the vacant see.

29 BAV, Urb.lat. 1038, *avviso* of 24 March 1555, fol. 47v: 3000 soldiers. After the short pontificate of Marcellus II, the duke of Urbino, acting as general of the Church, recruited 2000 soldiers for the second vacant seee of 1555; see the *avviso* of 4 May 1555, fol. 54r. BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 16 September 1559, fol. 84r: 1500 soldiers; BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 15 December 1565, fol. 152v: five companies, and at the time a company of the papal army ranged from 150 to 400 men; BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of 21 April 1585, fol. 189r: 3400 soliders for the vacant see of Greogroy XIII; BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 441v: "2/m fanti forastieri"; for the vacant see of Sixtus V; BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 19 October 1591, fol. 328r: 1000 soldiers; BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 4 January 1592, fol. 12r: 2000 soldiers; BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avvisi* of 2 March 1605 and 16 March 1605, fols. 97r and 129r: a company of light cavalry and a company of Corsicans and a thousand soldiers for the Capitol for the vacant see of Clement VIII. A dispatch from Agostino Nani noted that a thousand Corsicans were brought into the city as well; see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 54, 26 March 1605, fol. 52v. ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 83, dispatch of 6 February 1621, fol. 445v: 1200 soldiers; BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 12 July 1623, fol. 530r: five companies from Perugia and Umbria; ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of 1 August 1644 from the *capi degli ordini* to Taddeo Barberini, general of the Holy Church, fol. 479r: 2000 soldiers; and ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 136, dispatch of 9 January 1655, fol. 637r: 1600 foot soldiers and 200 horsemen. For the population of Rome, see Beloch, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Italiens*, 2:10–13.

men in town squares or gathered them in the villages and farmsteads.[30] Many mercenary captains, popular with the local populace, could quickly gather former soliders, henchmen, and relatives to fill the ranks of a company.

To these soldiers were often added several companies of Corsican mercenaries stationed at Civitavecchia. During longer interregna, these numbers could be augmented. At the end of Sixtus V's vacant see, five hundred soldiers were recruited due to the extraordinary violence, and after the the death of his successor, Urban VII, another thousand soldiers were summoned to the city.[31] Thus Rome, accustomed to having fewer than five hundred soldiers watching over the city at one time, might see that number increase four times over or more.

The recruited companies were stationed at key points in the city: St Peter's, the Capitoline Hill, and gates and bridges. Several more were placed to guard important locales, such as the Castel Sant'Angelo, the offices of the Cancelleria, and the papal bank, the Monte di Pietà. The soldiers barracked in St Peter's Square, the Forum, and the square near the Ponte Sisto in Trastevere. The general of the Holy Church issued a *bando* once all the necessary troops arrived that ordered the men "to live quietly and in fear of God."[32] Specifically, it prohibited the soldiers from blaspheming or assaulting the residents of the city—offenses that were nominally punishable by three *strappado* hoists and three years in the papal galleys. The *bandi* showed some leniency in the behavior of the soldiers; they could gamble in the barracks as long as they did not wager their weapons.

Not only the Roman authorities but individuals of all ranks armed themselves for protection against this ubiquitious violence, particulary against vendetta. After Paul III's death (1549), the Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo noted that "everyone is in arms, [b]oth at home and abroad, with wheel-lock

30 *Cronache della città di Perugia* (1575–1630), ed. Ariodante Fabretti (Turin, 1894), 5:55. These soldiers came from such places as Terni in Umbria, Viterbo and Montefiascone in the Patrimony, and Velletri and Frascati in the Alban Hills, south of Rome. Recruiting followed the same practices outlined by John R. Hale in his *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450–1620* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 75–76. Also see David Parrot, *The Business of War: Military Entreprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 2012).

31 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 467r, and *avviso* of 28 November 1590, fol. 621r.

32 ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 48, *bando* of Cesare Facchinetti, [no day given] Jaunary 1592, p. 253; t. 73, *bando* of Horatio Ludovisio, 13 July 1623, p. 296; and t. 74, *bando* of Taddeo Barberini, 3 August 1644, p. 346.

harquebuses in their hands instead of handkerchiefs."[33] When papal police stopped Gabriele Gui Piemontese for carrying a sword after the death of Innocent IX (1592), he justified himself by saying, "I carried it because everyone carried them during the vacant see."[34] Domenico da Velletri used the same defense when stopped by *sbirri* in the midst of the violent vacant see of 1623, claiming that "everyone had swords."[35] Finally, in the vacant see of 1644, the butcher Gian Francesco Pellegrino, arrested by the watchmen of Regola, excused himself by saying that "I carried the unsheathed sword for my defense because it was the vacant see."[36] Although these were not valid reasons for carrying illegal weapons, in the minds of their possessors, the vacant see justified their possession.

Others bought weapons specifically on account of the violence associated with the coming of the vacant see. Cipriano da Collegiove, arrested not far from Campo dei Fiori for carrying a sword, explained to the authorities of the governor's tribunal that "I bought the sword because I heard it said that it was the vacant see."[37] He had just bought the weapon from a sword maker in Campo dei Fiori. Similarly, Carlo Bongiatti, stopped for carrying a *terzarolo*, an outlawed handgun, told authorities that he a bought it from a smith on the first evening of the vacant see for thirty-three *giulii*, the equivalent of an artisan's average monthly wage.[38] To prevent the sale of weapons, the *caporioni* patrolled the shops of gunsmiths and other weapon makers.[39]

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33 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 13 November 1549, in *CSP*, 5:276.

34 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 427, testimony of Gabriel Gui Piemontese, 2 January 1592, fol. 72r.

35 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 712, testimony of Domenico da Velletri, 16 August 1623, fol. 92r–v. Also during the vacant see of 1623, Giovan Battista Bonzi, arrested for fighting with a coworker at a wine shop in Trastevere, excused his carrying of arms, claiming that "in this vacant see I carried both sword and dagger"; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 713, 21 August 1623, fol. 107r.

36 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 136, testimony of Gian Francesco Pellegrino, 1 August 1644, fol. 2r. Likewise, during Urban's vacant see, one Giovan Battista Lucino da Sermoneta, who was arrested for fighting with an artisan of the patrol of Sant'Angelo, justified his carrying of a sword with these words: "In the vacant see it is my habit to carry a sword and dagger at my side for my defense." See ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 149, 14 August 1644, fol. 4r.

37 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 427, testimony of Cipriano da Collegiove, 2 January 1592, fol. 76r.

38 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 3, testimony of Carlo Bongiatti Romano, 8 January 1655, fol. 4v. For the pay of the average artisan, see Renata Ago, *Economia barocca: Mercato e istituzioni nella Roma del Seicento* (Rome, 1998), p. 14.

39 See ASR, TCS, b. 196, c. 9, 14 January 1655, fol. 1v, and c. 29, testimony of Orsino Galato, *capotoro* of Sant'Eustachio, 6 April 1655, fol. 1r.

Both the governor of Rome and the *Popolo Romano* took measures against the carrying of arms. The *capi degli ordini* had the governor reissue *bandi* that revoked all previous licenses to carry weapons and that renewed bans on prohibited weapons, such as blades shorter than three *palmi* (thirty inches) and handguns. The *Popolo Romano* matched the *bandi* of the governor with edicts. The provisions of both of these *bandi* were the same as those issued while the pope lived, except that fines were doubled. The resulting fifty-*scudi* fine was a princely sum for a poor artisan, who also faced three hoists on the *strappado*. Those carrying outlawed weapons could also face the death penalty, although this seemed to have been rarely invoked.[40]

Despite the stern language of the decrees, nobles and their henchmen regularly armed themselves in expectation of potential assaults. The general *bandi* of the governor, regardless of fears that armed groups might provoke brawls and tumults, allowed nobles to walk in groups of eight. Commoners could only walk about in groups of four. The reports of Venetian ambassadors attest to how the barons and nobles of Rome were attended by large retinues of armed men.[41] Mocenigo wrote of the vacant see of Paul IV that

> throughout the city then one did not see anything but armed companies that they call *quadriglie* and few cared to go about during the day alone or in the time of night with others so that it appeared to me like being in the countryside in an army, as I found myself in 1547 in Germany.[42]

The *caporioni* nevertheless frequently stopped the servants and retainers of cardinals and nobles, arresting them and confiscating their weapons. This could provoke threats and armed assault from the arrogant henchmen. When the constable Ambrogio Galli and his patrol, watching Porta di San Giovanni, seized a pistol from a Colonna servant seeking entry to the city, the servant warned him "to keep good care of it because he was a servant of the signor

40 For the *bandi* of the governor concerning weapons, see note 20 of this chapter. For those of conservators, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, *bando* of 17 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, *bando* of 31 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, *bando* of 9 January 1655, n. p. Conservators revoked all licenses to carry weapons, particularly small weapons and pistols, on the pain of death.

41 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 13 November 1549, *CSP*, 5:276.

42 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *Relazione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38. Here Mocenigo referred to the Schmalkaldic War, which pitted Charles V and his Catholic allies agasint the Protestant princes of the Holy Roman Empire. A *quadriglia* had originally referred to small bands of knights, but by the 16th century meant a nobleman and his retinue of armed henchmen.

Constable Colonna."[43] At the vacant see of Urban VIII (1644), a gentleman in the service of Cardinal Mattei killed the *capotoro* of Sant'Eustachio after the latter had seized swords and daggers from the cardinal's servants. The henchman surprised the *capotoro* later that evening with a posse, firing seven or eight shots at him.[44] Another Mattei henchman, this time during the vacant see of Innocent X (1655), refused to give his sword to the patrol of Campo Marzio by saying that "he was a soldier of the guard of the Illustrious Signor Baron Mattei."[45]

These men accompanied their masters throughout the city, offering protection against assaults and providing a threatening bravado toward enemies. In 1585, Gian Pietro Caffarelli explained to authorities why he surrounded himself with a posse of soldiers and *bravi* as he walked through Rome. He asserted that "in the time of the vacant see it is usual for gentlemen like me to keep men."[46] Soldiers were also hired to follow the ornate carriages of the elite. In the vacant see of Paul IV (1559), the nobleman Vicenzo Crescenzi told the judges of the governor's tribunal that "you should know that it being the vacant see I took with me about five or six men in a coach armed with swords and daggers for my protection."[47] In 1585, the soldier Gasparo de la Molara was arrested along with Angelo Serli near the Pantheon for carrying weapons. Gasparo told the judge of the governor's Tribunal that he and Angelo followed the carriage of Signor Giovanni Battista Gottifreddi on foot throughout the vacant see.[48]

In addition to arming their servants, the prelates and nobles of Rome also armed their houses, turning Rome into an armed camp. They locked the doors and windows of their palaces with chains or portcullises, and, as late as 1559, placed light artillery atop their towers.[49] Cardinals also retained large numbers

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43 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Ambrogio Galli Romano, 4 August 1623, fol. 789r.

44 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of the governor of Rome to the *capi degli ordini*, 31 July 1644, fol. 527r. For the trial, see ASR, TCS, Processi, busta 147, c. 4.

45 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 6, testimony of the constable Domenico Capone da Colleferro, 20 February 1655, fol. 1r.

46 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 344, testimony of Gian Pietro Caffarelli Romano, 30 June 1585, fol. 39r. For a similar example, see also ASR, TCG, Costitui, vol. 427, testimony of Marco Santori, 1 January 1592, fol. 75v. Santori accompanied the knight Giuseppe de Isope, majordomo of Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, throughout the vacant see by "going with him through the streets."

47 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimony of Vincenzo Crescenzi, 14 Febraury 1560, fol. 130v.

48 ASR, TCG, Costitui, vol. 342, testimony of Gasparo de la Molara Romano, 17 May 1585, fol. 75r.

49 ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 77 (1655–56), Carlo Cartari, "Diario e cronache degli avvenimenti romani, e pontifici in partocilare, e d'Europa in generale con allegato documenti a stampo

of guards at their palaces as protection against general burglary and also against the risk of pillage at the rumor of their election as pope. As noble households decreased in size after the financial crisis of the 16th century, potentates began to rely on subjects from their fiefs or hired men from the streets to serve as guards.[50] These numbers could reach staggering levels. The diarist Lelio Dalle Valle in 1585 estimated that several lords kept between two hundred and four hundred soldiers at their houses due to the hordes of outlaws that entered the city.[51]

Ambassadors also armed their palaces with guards and soldiers. The Spanish ambassador in particular always sought to keep his palace well-guarded, to the point that his actions seemed to threaten the authority of the College of Cardinals and the peace of the city. In the vacant see of 1549, the ambassador Diego Hurtado de Mendoza issued a decree ordering all of his Spanish subjects to assemble before his palace under the penalty of being punished at his discretion. The *capi degli ordini* rebuked the ambassador, who apologized by "saying that he saw so many weapons in the hands of the French."[52] This episode not only highlighted the tensions between the Spanish and French that emerged with the papal election, but also revealed the weakness of the papacy during the vacant see. The papal government lost its monopoly, if it ever had it, over violence as ambassasdors persistently brought throngs of men into the city.

In the face of the protests of the cardinals, the Spanish ambassador continued to keep large numbers of soliders at his palace. After the death of Clement VIII (1605) a newsletter complained that "among the many men that appeared here and were also made to come by these lords and barons for this vacant see there was a company of Spanish soldiers made to come for the service of the palace of the Catholic ambassador, hence one sees through the streets so many armed men that one cannot go about without forcing himself [through them]."[53] Earlier, the company, which numbered two hundred soldiers,

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e stampe," fol. 2r. For the light artillery, see the report of Alvise Mocenigo of 1560 in Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38.

50 For the decreasing numbers of servants that cardinals and other members of the Roman elite kept at their palaces, see Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:434–37 and 1:451–53; and Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1990), pp. 33–34.

51 Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Della Valle," p. 252.

52 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 13 November 1549, *CSP*, 5:275–76.

53 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 12 March 1605, fol. 138r. For Spanish hegemony in Rome, see Dandelet, *Spanish Rome*. For the Spanish ambassador bringing 400 men into the city during the vacant see of 1590 to guard his palace, see ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio

paraded before the Spanish national church of San Giacomo in Piazza Navona, a true example of Spanish hegemony in Rome.[54]

Heightened political contexts also contributed to the influx of Spanish soldiers into the city. After the death of Urban VIII (1644), the viceroy of Naples protested the numerous Frenchmen in Rome who had been serving the Barberini against the Farnese in the recently concluded War of Castro, and he began posting soldiers along the border of the Papal States. A company entered the city for the protection of the Spanish ambassador.[55] The Savoyard agent Palleti wrote that the Spanish ambassador had 6000 soldiers stationed at the border between the Papal States and Naples and wanted to recruit more men for his protection "despite the public orders [of the College of Cardinals]."[56] Eleven years later, after the death of Innocent X (1655), again amid controversies between the French and Spanish in Rome and Italy, the Spanish amassed soldiers near the boundaries between the Papal State and the Kingdom of Naples. The Venetian ambassador Niccolò Sagredo informed his government that the Spanish had amassed "at the borders of the kingdom, not more than 40 miles from Rome around 50 companies of infantry." Many of these men, he continued, "filed toward Rome and put themselves in the house of the ambassador of Spain. It is believed that he wants to increase his guard to a thousand soldiers."[57] On the day of the pope's death, although the Spanish ambassador already had five hundred men, Sagredo nevertheless had written that "it appears that he wants to increase even this extraordinary number."[58] The extraordinary numbers of soldiers of that the Spanish brought to the city far surpassed what the ambassador and their cardinals actually needed;

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diplomatico, Rome, f. 3301, dispatches of Giovanni Niccolini to the Grand Duke, 30 August and 3 September 1590, fols. 184r and 196r. In 1623, the ambassador brought two companies into Rome to watch his palace and those of the Spanish cardials; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 539r.

54 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 19 March 1605, fol. 49r.

55 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 121, dispatch of 6 August 1644, fol. 50v. The Savoyard agent Palleti numbered the soldiers from Naples at 400; see AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 54, 23 July 1644, n. p.

56 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 54, letter of 21 August 1644. Urban VIII and the Barberini had forged a close alliance with Cardinal Mazarin and the French as a counterweight to Spanish influence.

57 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 136, dispatch of 9 January 1655, fol. 632v.

58 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 136, dispatch of 7 January 1655, fol. 618r–v.

rather, it was a show of force intended to impress and influence the College of Cardinals in the conclave.

Smaller states likewise stationed large numbers of troops at their embassies. During the vacant see of 1623, one hundred soldiers from the Duke of Braccaccio watched over the Medici palace in Piazza Madama, and two hundred harquebusiers protected the Cardinal of Savoy.[59] At the next vacant see of 1644, the Vice Legate of Viterbo notified the cardinals of "a troop of disarmed Tuscan youths passing through here for Rome at all hours." The youths, who numbered more than two hundred, sought to serve the Medici cardinal.[60]

As the last example demonstrates, in many cases these men were not officially enlisted and stipended soldiers of the home states of cardinals and ambassadors. Rather, they were often mercenaries and adventutuers, sometimes registered in the companies of petty captains, sometimes rootless men looking for easy money and excitement. In 1623, the Tuscan ambassador Curtio Picchea had to procure his own soldiers to protect his palace. He wrote the Grand Duke that he hired the services of a knight from Città di Castello with a company of men to protect Palazzo Madama. This could take time as well, since the knight "promised faithful and diligent assistance," but he added it could take "some time to assemble his men."[61] In the end Picchea hired the knight yet had to request money from the Grand Duke to pay the salaries of the knight and his men. In the meantime, the ambassador made use of eighty men from his noble ally Paolo Giordano II Orsini to guard his palace and garden.[62]

The defensive needs of the prelates and magnates thus attracted great numbers of young men to Rome. Ambassadors, diarists, and newsletter writers marveled at how they swarmed the streeets and squares of Rome. A common

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59 BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 539r and ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 88, dispatch of 5 August 1623, fol. 532r. The Tuscan ambassador Curtio Picchea wrote the Savoyard cardinal had arranged for a captain with around 100 to 150 men to come to Rome to serve as guards "of the courtyard of Montegiordano," where his palace was located in Campo Marzio; see ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3338, dispatch of 7 July 1623, fol. 466r.

60 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of the Vice Legate to the *capi degli ordini*, 2 August 1644, fol. 234r.

61 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3338, dispatch of 7 July 1623, fol. 467r.

62 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3338, dispatch of 14 July 1623, fol. 493r. For another example of a Tuscan ambassador recruiting soldiers, see the dispatch of Giovanni Niccolini, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3321, dispatch of 2 March 1605, fol. 97r.

refrain was that never before had anyone witnessed so many troops in a vacant see. After the death of Clement VIII (1605), a newslettter writer reported that

> there appeared many armed men in Rome in this vacant see—more than usual—such that one could not walk through the streets unless in an armed troop. Moreover, it is said that beyond [Rome], in the border regions, there are many more, and among so many soldiers had been made to come by the private lords.[63]

In similar tones, in the vacant see of 1623, a newsletter writer fearfully commented that "there was never seen in a similar vacant see a greater number of soldiers than this time and the provisions are not directed well and the edicts are of little use."[64] The Savoyard agent Paletti echoed these sentiments in 1644 in a dispatch wherein he wrote of the great numbers of armed men kept by the French and Spanish ambassadors and noted "the entire city is in arms, which has never been done in other times."[65]

These men sought to join a company watching over the city or to become guards in a cardinal's or ambassador's palace. The soldiers, generally peasants and laborers from the small towns and countryside of Lazio and Umbria, were drawn by the easy work of guarding (as opposed to fighting in a campaign) in a city full of temptations. The average pay of three *scudi* a month, constant for this period, while paltry compared to the five or six that a master artisan made, was still a great deal more than peasants and unskilled laborers typically earned.[66] Moreover, the second half of the 16th century (particularly during

63 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 12 March 1605, fol. 114r.

64 BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 15 July 1623, fol. 540v.

65 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 54, letter of 29 July 1644; n. p. See also the letter of the governor of Rome to the *capi degli ordini*; ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," 20 August 1644, fol. 546r. For similar concerns at the vacant sees of 1655, see the entry of diarist Carlo Cartari where he wrote "in all the palaces of the cardinals, ambassadors, princes and titled lords are many soldiers as guards who carry all sorts of weapons and many more than in the past vacant see"; see ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 77, "Diario e cronache," fol. 18r.

66 Lutz, "Das Päpstliche Heer in Jahre 1667," pp. 183–85, notes that foot soldiers earned 3 *scudi* a month and cavalrymen five to eight *scudi* a month. This is quite similar to what Hale finds most soldiers throughout Europe were paid in the early modern period; see idem, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*, pp. 109–11. Various contemporary sources conform this for the guards of the vacant see: Giulio di Velletri, a soldier in the company of Captain Alessandro di Velletri, made three *scudi* a month during the vacant see of

the intense famine of the early 1590s) and the first half of the 17th century were marked by overpopulation, poor harvests, and poor wages. Dubbed the "Iron Century" by Henry Kamen, these were especially trying times for the working poor.[67] Consequently, many took to the road as vagabonds, offsetting periods of unemployment or underemployment by becoming soldiers.

The vacant see was a real opportunity for these men living on the margins of the small towns and villages of the Campagna. Giovan Battista, a peasant from the small Lazio town of Bassano, told authorities that he came to Rome to serve under Captain Simone Romano with the coming of Paul IV's interregnum of 1559.[68] At the start of Pius IV's vacant see in 1565, Silvio da Scapezzano, who had worked in the vineyards of Cardinal Orsini "until this vacant see," left his position to join up with the company of soldiers watching the conclave.[69] Similarly, during the vacant see of Sixtus V (1590), Pietro Paolo, a plowman for one Angelo Pratolo from Castelnovo, quit his job, "since around this vacant see," and with his payment of three and half *scudi* in small coin, headed south to Rome, where "I took time off to spend the money Angelo had given me, with which I bought a sword in order to become a soldier."[70] In 1605, Checco, a vineyard worker from the town of Vignanello in northern Lazio, came to Rome "at the vacant see and spent two days at the inn of the Campana on via Scrofa" before finding work as a soldier with a company stationed in the Borgo.[71]

Gregory XIII; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, testimony of Giulio da Velletri, 6 May 1585, fol. 61v. A newsletter of 23 April 1605 noted that the pay of the soldiers at the conclave was three *scudi*; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, fol. 208r. Finally, the newsletter writer, Gioseffe Gualdi, wrote that the soldiers made for the vacant see of Innocent X in 1655 made three *scudi* a month; see GRI, MS, "Il Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi, 1654–55," t. II, fol. 6r. For the pay of skilled artisans and unskilled laborers, see Ago, *Economia barocca*, p. 14.

67 Henry Kamen, *Iron Century: Social Change in Europe, 1550–1660* (New York, 1971). For the connection between poverty, soldiers, and banditry, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1972; repr. Berkeley, 1995), 2:39–43 and Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:435–46, and 2:568–96.

68 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimony of Giovanbattista da Bassano, 3 March 1560, fols. 159r–160v.

69 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimony of Silvio da Scapezzano, 14 December 1565, fol. 81v.

70 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 238, c. 9, testimony of Pietro Paolo da Castelnovo, 12 September 1590, fol. 131v.

71 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 522, testimony of Checco da Vignanello, 22 May 1605, fol. 95r–v. Also in 1605, the peasant Silvestro and several of his impoverished companions broke out of the local prison in Nepi, made their way to Rome, and found work as soldiers in the companies guarding the Capitol; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 522, testimony of Silvestro da Nepi, 21 April 1605, fols. 11v–12r.

Most would-be soldiers travelled from further afield than the Campagna, with the majority coming from Umrbia and the Marches, regions with reputations for producing fighting men. Once news of Gregory XIII's death in 1585 reached Perguia, the poor of this Umbrian city and the surrounding countryside left in droves to find work as soldiers in Rome. One Agnolo da Perugia, who identified as one who "wanders for pleasure and for war," left for Rome "this vacant see with all the youth of Perugia."[72] During the second vacant see of 1590, Attilo Vidoni left Sirolo in the Marches for Rome with eight other men whom he indentified as soldiers. Before the judges of the governor's tribunal he explained that "I struck out for Rome because I am poor and I heard that there is good living in Rome."[73] Once in Rome, Agnolo found work guarding the palace and gardens of the Tuscan ambassador.

Many of these men were mercenaries who had recently fought in wars in the Italian peninsula, especially those close to Rome. For example, Giovan Battista and Gabriele, two veterans of the papacy's war against Philip II's forces in Naples, found employment in a company guarding Rome during the four months of Paul's vacant see.[74] Others came from the ranks of Spanish soldiers who had fought in the war.[75] Almost a century later, after the death of Urban VIII, disbanded soldiers from the War of Castro joined those coming to Rome for the vacant see. A series of letters from the governors in the provinces to the College of Cardinals reveals how officials feared these soldiers and took measures against them.[76] On 9 August 1644, the governor of Perugia wrote that he issued *bandi* to "impede those travelers who in crowds set out in your direction with evil thoughts." He was particualry concerned with the soldiers returning from Castro and with the local pilgrims (many of whom were disguised bandits), who had attended the feast day of the Perdono d'Assisi.[77] The governors denied passports for these soldiers to pass through their cities and arrested those who did not comply. Despite the governors' efforts, bands of soldiers entered Rome a week later. The governor of Rome, Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, wrote to the *capi degli ordini* that "at this time there entered in Rome disbanded soldiers; now I hear through fairly certain reports that their number

72 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 344, testimony of Agnolo da Perugia, 1 July 1585, fols. 42r–43r.

73 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 409, testimony of Attilo Vidoni da Perugia, 4 December 1590, fols. 204v–205v.

74 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimonies of Giovan Battista da Brisichella, 3 March 1560, fol. 159v.

75 Von Pastor, *HOP* (1924), 15:30.

76 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fols. 35r–160r.

77 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of the governor of Perugia to the *capi degli ordini*, 9 August 1644, fol. 152r. Many of the bandits and soldiers left votive offerings at the Basilica in Assisi before departing for Rome.

is growing ever larger." The soldiers, he continued, expressed an interest in "coming to Rome because of the curiousness of the vacant see," which a good number of them may have never witnessed before, since the last vacant see had occurred twenty-one years earlier.[78] Although men from the Papal States constituted the majority of these disbanded men, quite a few were French soldiers that the Cardinal Mazarin had sent to Parma to aid his Barberini allies in the war against the Duke of Castro.[79]

Since many vacant sees only lasted a few weeks, soldiers had to hurry to Rome if they were going to find work. Even in longer vacant sees, there seems to have been a brief window of opportunity when companies would take recruits. Lorenzo da Spello, for example, failed to find work. Arrested for fighting with an acquaintance from his hometown, he told the officials of the governor's tribunal that

> my profession is being a soldier and, in the present vacant see of Urban, I came to Rome in order to enlist in some companies of Rome but, because it was already finished, I have been so without any association, lodging now at this or that inn.[80]

He had been in Rome since 20 October and the pope had been dead since 27 September, so at least after a month, recruiters had quit accepting men. Others fell into the work of a soldier. Christoforo, a peasant from a small hamlet near Perugia, told the governor's tribunal that "I came to Rome after Pope Urban died, and wanted to find work in some vineyard so that I would not die of hunger."[81] Instead, he enlisted in the company of the Captain Annibale da Perugia that was stationed in St Peter's Square

Local connections helped others find jobs as guards in the official companies guarding the city and conclave. Giovan Battista da Stabio came all the way down from the Lake Como region to find work at the pope's death. He told the governor's judge that "in my village it was too difficult to make a living . . . so

78 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino to the *capi degli ordini*, 17 August 1644, fols. 543r–553v.

79 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 121, dispatch of Cardinal Federico Cornaro, 6 August 1644, fol. 50v.

80 ASR, TCG, Processii (16th cen.), b. 235, c. 24, testimony of Lorenzo da Spello, 30 October 1590, fol. 381r. Urban VII's vacant see lasted until 5 December 1590, when the cardinals elected Gregory XIV.

81 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 244, c. 38, testimony of Christoforo da Villa San Rinato, 18 December 1590, fol. 1435r.

that when the Pope died, and it being near Christmas, I came to earn something to sustain myself [in the service] of Captain Paolo," who headed a company guarding the conclave.[82] A minor Lombard noble from the region, one Alessandro Posterla from Ligornetto, a courtier in Pius IV's court, had helped Giovanni Battista and several other men from that region find jobs at the conclave. Thus, even after the death of the pope, the ties of patronage that linked him to his countrymen continued.

Soliders often deserted the official companies levied by captains hired by the papacy in order to find work with ambassadors, lay potentates, and cardinals. In 1591 Giulio Rovelli and Martiano Muscano of Ferentino, arrested for stealing horses in Campo dei Fiori, had left the company of Captain Ortensio Tenore da Velletri that had spent the summer and autumn hunting bandits, to find work as private guards during the vacant see. Martiano explained that

> I came to Rome eight or ten days after Pope Gregory XIV had died, though I don't exactly remember the day, and with me came Giulio, Giovanni Franco, Giovanni Corazzino, his godfather Ambrosio Malatesta, and one or two others whom I don't remember. All of us came here to Rome in order to get set up in some palace as soldiers as is usually done in the vacant see.[83]

This must have been commonplace, especially when the *capi degli ordini* and their officials were tardy in paying the soldiers. In 1644 the governor of Rome wrote the *capi degli ordini* that, due to the lack of pay, "many of the Corsican soldiers leave their companies to serve in the palaces of these ambassadors, princes and others with the greatest harm to the good service of the Holy See."[84]

Better pay was the most common reason behind the desertion of the official companies in favor of serving individual potentates and their families. The professional vicissitudes of the soldier Giuseppe Pataccino's employment during the back-to-back vacant sees of 1605 is a case in point. Giuseppe, already living in Rome for ten months, served before the vacant see as a soldier of the papal fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo, making three *scudi* a month. With

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82 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 110, c.12, February–April 1566, testimonies of Giovan Battista da Stabio and Francesco da Treda, fols. 674r, 692r, and 717r; for Giovan Battista's quote, see fol. 674r.

83 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 244, c. 14, testimony of Martiano Muscano da Ferentello, 9 November 1591, fols. 529v–530r.

84 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," undated letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino to the *capi degli ordini*, fol. 668r.

the coming of the vacant see he left papal fortresss, transferring to the service of the Venetian ambassador because, in his own words, "I didn't like to stay there anymore." His reason for preferring the service of the ambassador was greater pay. Giuseppe claimed that "the Signor Ambassador gave me ten gold *scudi* while I stayed in his service during the vacant see." After the death of Leo XI a month later, he could not find work with the ambassador because he had gotten into a fight near San Marco, and so he enlisted as a soldier in the company of Captain Giovan Battista Scotti in the Borgo.[85] His case was not an isolated one. In the vacant see of 1559, Teodoro d'Ascoli left the employment of Captain Prospero of Ascoli to assume guard duty for the Cardinal of Urbino, showing a regional loyalty. This was not the case for many, however. The Venetian ambassador did not have many of his fellow countrymen in Rome to employ as guards.[86] Even potentates with large numbers of *paesani* in the city often relied on members of the rootless masses to act as guards. In 1585, the Cardinal de' Medici employed an impoverished boatman as a soldier for his palace. The boatman, named Gaspare, who normally slept wherever he could find a welcoming bed, sometimes even a makeshift one on his boat, could tell the governor's tribunal that "this vacant see I slept in the palace of the Medici with the other soldiers that the cardinal kept there as I, too, was a soldier and we slept in the courtyard under the loggias."[87]

The governor of Rome saw the potential danger from these men. From the late 16th century were issued provisions in general *bandi* that limited the number of soldiers that each potentate could bring into the city to guard his palace. The first extant *bando* against the number of soldiers was issued in 1623. It limited, beyond the usual number of retained familiars and servants (thus revealing these to be thinly veiled *bravi*), the number of soldiers to twenty-five for cardinals, twenty for ambassadors, fifteen for the Roman Barons, and eight for other nobles, gentlemen, and merchants.[88] The cardinals and nobles who brought these men from their fiefs or hired those who came to the city had to register them in the lists of the governor's tribunal within days of their arrival. Failing to do so resulted in a punishment at the governor's arbitration. Starting

85 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 552, testimony of Giuseppe Pataccino, 2 May 1605, fol. 99r–v.

86 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Teodoro d'Ascoli, 2 February 1560, fol. 33v. For the absence of a large Venetian community in Rome, see Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:211.

87 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 198, c. 4, testimony of Gaspare Romano, 4 June 1585, fol. 248r.

88 *Bando* of the governor of Rome of 19 October 1591 in ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 28, n. p.

with Clement VIII's vacant see (1605), all potentates and merchants, regardless of rank, could only keep ten soldiers from outside the city at their premises. Those who wanted more men had to seek a license from the governor.[89] As we have seen, cardinals blatantly ignored these provisions. In an extant register of soldiers recruited to guard the palaces of cardinals for Urban VIII's vacant see (1644), many either failed to list the number of troops at their palace or grossly underrepresented their numbers. Cardinal Cennino, a favorite of the people for election, claimed to have no troops guarding his palace, a claim echoed by the cardinals, Bichi and Monti. Others, such as the Barberini-backed Sacchetti, did not list their troops in the rolls.[90] Nevertheless, many cardinals felt that ten foreign soldiers was not enough, and in 1644 the Cardinals d'Este and de' Medici, with the support of their Spanish followers, pushed for a new law in the first congregation of the Sacred College that would increase the number of guards each cardinal and ambassador could have to twenty-five foreign men.[91]

In spite of this decree, the Venetian ambassador Sagredo noted that at the next vacant see in 1655, the *capi degli ordini* had to warn the cardinals and ambassadors in Rome to "moderate the guards of their houses to twenty-five soldiers," and he was struck by how "in many [of these houses] there were excesses, seeing fortresses occupy the streets and public squares with their numerous guards that they kept changing."[92] As this example shows, authorities recognized the danger of an excess numbers of soldiers, especially private soldiers hired by ambassadors and cardinals. Moreover, the ambassadors also recognized this danger. The College of Cardinals issued decrees against keeping an excess number of men; yet out of fear of ritual pillages, tumults, and theft, cardinals and potentates regularly flaunted these decrees. As we shall see, these fears were not unfounded, as this influx of imported fighting men brought new levels of violence to the city.

89 ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 5 March 1605, p. 212; *bando* of 30 January 1621, p. 213; and *bando* of 9 July 1623, p. 214.

90 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urban VIII," fols. 601r–619r.

91 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori, Rome, f. 121, dispatch of Cardinal Federico Cornaro, 30 July 1644, fols. 45v–46r; and ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," decree of Sacred College, 31 July 1644, fol. 601r.

92 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatore al senato, Rome, f. 136, dispatch of 9 January 1655, fol. 627r–v.

The Paradox of Protection

Out of fear of the very real violence that accompanied every vacant see, both city officials and private individuals resorted to hiring soldiers from a pool of young men who came to Rome to seek employment. Paradoxically, the great numbers of these men and their proclivity toward crime only exacerbated the violence and disorder. These men—poor, and with rap sheets featuring an assortment of crimes—in many cases were bandits in the legal sense of the term. That is, they had been banned from their homelands, and in many cases from the Papal States, for a series of minor and major crimes. Lacking real kin, they found protection and support by forming small gangs that made a living practicing all sorts of skullduggery. The vacant see attracted these men because it gave them the opportunity to find patrons and work as guards and soldiers; additionally it gave them a chance to make extra money through theft and murder. The soldier-bandit was a common figure in early modern Italy, one that frightened authorities, as soldiers brought war, rape, and destruction to the towns that they encountered.[93] Interrenal Rome was no different. Soldiers, charged with providing peace and stability to Rome, more often than not were the greatest sources of violence. Although Rome never experienced the type of destruction that roving armies wrecked on towns and villages in the path of wars, the city did experience a perceptible surge of violence with the influx of these men from the countryside and the greater Papal States. This was a regular occurrence—fixed on the frequently short reigns of popes—which the city came to dread.

A perusal of the registers of both the governor's tribunal and that of the conservators of Rome gives a profile of the type of crimes for which these soldier-bandits had been jailed and banned. Some of these men appear to be true opportunists rather than professional criminals, since petty theft and episodic, often opportunistic, crimes were the norm.[94] After breaking out of jail in the small town of Nepi, Silvestro da Nepi and his companions made their way to Rome to find work as soldiers of the conclave. Silvestro and his companions had been arrested for stealing goats and for debt.[95] Others were banished for

93 Lauro Martines, *Furies: War in Europe, 1450–1700* (New York, 2013), pp. 177–211.

94 Thomas V. Cohen, "Three Forms of Jeopardy: Honor, Pain, and Truth-Telling in a Sixteenth-Century Courtroom," *SCJ* 29 (1998), 975–98.

95 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 552, testimony of Silvestro da Nepi, 21 April 1605, fol. 12r. Similarly, Checco da Vignanello had been arrested in his hometown for an undisclosed cause; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 552, 22 May 1605, fol. 95r.

more serious thefts. Martiano Muscano and his companion Giulio Rovelli, former soldiers enlisted to fight bandits, came to Rome after Gregory XIV's death to find work as guards in a potentate's palace. Both Muscano and Rovelli had been banned from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and from the Papal States for a number of crimes, including horse theft and failing to perform their service in France against heretics.[96] Several soldiers arrested near Piazza Navona, a favorite hangout for vagrants, after the election of Urban VIII in 1623 all had similar criminal pasts. Giovanni Alfani da Velletri, a soldier who served the house of Aldobrandini, had been exiled during Gregory's theft.[97] Tommaso d'Orvieto, arrested a few days after Alfani, had been exiled several months earlier for stealing a pouch of twenty-five *scudi*.[98] These soliders evidently thought that their banishments ceased to be valid during the vacant see. Another soldier arrested after the conclave of 1623—one Tulio da Zagarola, who had served at the Capitol—had been banned for an undisclosed reason but reasoned that he could come back to Rome "because it was the vacant see."[99]

Other soldiers had been banned for more serious crimes that included fighting and murder, a testament to the irascible nature of these men and their value to potential patrons as guards and *bravi*. The *costituti* of the governor's tribunal in 1585 reveal several soldier-bandits who committed violent crimes that led to their banishment. Agnolo da Perugia had been banned for the murder of Captain Persio Vittorio in his homeland; his companion Angelo Arigucci, likewise from Perugia, had been jailed twice, once for the murder of Maso Salvacci Perugino and another time for a sword fight with Captain Cesare da Monte Mellino. Both had also suffered stiffer punishments: Agnolo had been condemned to galley service, and Angelo was to be sent to the gallows. However, patronage from minor feudal lords and mercenary captains resulted in their remisssions.[100] Also in 1585, one Giuseppe Antonocci da Terni, who along with Apsotolo Calabrese found employment watching the palace of Signor Prospero Colonna, had been exiled from Terni for wounding an enemy in a fight.[101] During that vacant see, Colonna also made use of other banned

96 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 244, c. 14, testimony of Martiano Muacano da Ferentino, 9 Novermber 1591, fol. 530r.

97 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 713, testimony of Giovanni Alfani da Velletri, 13 August 1623, fol. 86r–v.

98 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 713, testimony of Tomasso d'Orvieto, 15 August 1623, fol. 91r–v.

99 ASR. TCG, Costituti, vol. 713, testimomy of Tulio da Zagarola, 13 August 1623, fol. 87r.

100 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 344, testimony of Agnolo da Perugia, 1 July 1585, fols. 43v–44v, and ibid., testimony of Angelo di Michele Arigucci, 2 July 1585, 47r–49r and 116v–117r.

101 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Giuseppe Antonocci da Terni, 15 May 1585, fols. 78r–80r. Prospero Colonna was known to keep many bandits at his house and in

men, including Giuliano Ciaglia and Giovan Maria. The latter came to Rome "to serve Signor Prospero Colonna to guard his palace and to do other necessary things."[102] Giovan Maria had been imprisoned for fighting in Subiaco, so he may have actually been a *bravo* in Colonna's service.[103] Other men seemed to have specialized in just this sort of violent behavior—professional murder. Giulio Galligoni da Velletri, enlisted as a soldier of Captain Marcone to protect the conclave, had killed several men from Perugia.[104] Andrea Alfani, a veteran of the Siege of Malta of 1565, had traveled from Salerno to Rome with several other soliders to find work as guards during the vacant see. He, too, had killed many men throughout his career as a soldier.[105]

Once these men made it to Rome, they wasted no time in causing a ruckus and provoking disturbances among the populace. An anonymous Perugian chronicler noted that, with the advent of the vacant see of 1585, "so many lords and cardinals went to Rome with as many soldiers as they could bring, and it is said that all of Rome is topsy-turvey."[106] This lament colored all of the vacant sees of the early modern era. In 1623, a newsletter writer also linked the increased violence of that year's vacant see with the influx of soldiers into the city, writing that Rome, "finding itself without the Vicar of Christ and full of soldiers, several other murders and crimes happened this week." The newsletter then listed a litanty of crimes that the soldiers committed, including the killing of an innkeeper at the Piazza di Sciarra and a *sbirro*.[107] The diarist Gigli blamed much of this violence on the soldiers protecting the residences

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his lands; see Elena Fasano Guarini, "'Rome, Workshop of All the Practices of the World': From the Letters of Ferinando de' Medici to Cosimo I and Francesco I," in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700*, eds. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antionetta Visceglia (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), p. 68.

102 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Giuliano Ciaglia da Marino, 28 April 1585, fol. 55r.

103 For other men banned for fighting, see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, testimony of Giulio da Velletri, 6 May 1585, fol. 59v; and ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 427, testimony of Marco Santori, 1 January 1592, fol. 75v.

104 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, testimony of Giulio Galligoni da Velletri, 29 April 1585, fol. 57r.

105 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimony of Andrea Alfani da Salerno, 20 Janaury 1566, fol. 170r. For a similar example of a soldier with a long list of murders under his belt; see ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 110, c. 8, testimony of Giovan Ambrosio da Ligornetto, 29 March 1566, fols. 722v–723v.

106 *Cronache della città di Perugia*, 5:55.

107 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 5 August 1623, fol. 215v.

of ambassadors and lords of the city, especially the soldiers of the ambassador and Cardinal of Savoy.[108]

The registers of the criminal tribunals of both the governor and the conservators of Rome corroborate the violence of the soldiers recruited during the vacant see that newsletters and ambassador reports frequently discussed. Fighting among themselves or with civilians was the most frequent offense of the soldiers. These fights typically occurred during moments of sociability between the soldiers and the people of Rome, and generally occurred at taverns and in city squares, where the soldiers met to relax with drink. Games of chance or skill, such as pall-mall, tennis, football, and dice and card games, attracted gangs of youths and soldiers to these locales, and provoked brawls among them.[109] For example, a game of pall-mall between soldiers of the conclave and several bakers' apprentices in Piazza di San Silvestro devolved, after taunts were traded, into a major tumult, with swords drawn and stones flying.[110] Besides being agonistic competitions of strength and skill, money was at the heart of these games. During the vacant see of 1644, the Perugian captain Zingarino shot another mercenary captain over a game of chance while they were standing on duty at the palace of the Cancelleria. The shooting provoked a brawl among the soldiers, and Zingarino, wounded in the fray, escaped out the window into the Church of San Lorenzo in Damaso to avoid arrest. The governor's men discovered 1000 Spanish doubloons and many other valuable items, suggesting that Zingarino was also a thief.[111]

Soldiers also clashed with the policing authorities, both the artisan patrols of the *Popolo Romano* and the *sbirri* of the papal governor. Being outsiders to Rome and in the pay of powerful lords, they refused to recognize the authority of either patrol. In 1623, the patrol of the *rione* of Colonna stopped four men for carrying *terzaroli* and other prohibited weapons. When stopped, the men responded to the patrol with arrogance, telling him that "we don't have to stop for anyone" and that "we have great masters." The *caporione*, Francesco

108 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:125. The Savoyard ambassador was aware of the troubles caused by his men; see the letter of the agent Abate Alessandro Scaglia to the duke; see AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 33, letter of 5 August 1623, n. p.

109 For examples of gaming and gambling, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, 23 July 1623, fols. 857r–858r; ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 6, 1 April 1655, fol. 1r–v; ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 4, 17 January 1655, fols. 1r–3r; ASR, TCS, b. 196, c. 3, fol. 1r; and ASR, TCS, busta 196, c. 7, 11 February 1655, fols. 1r–2r.

110 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of various witnesses, 24 and 28 July 1623, fols. 161r–163r.

111 ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 96, *avviso* of 17 September 1644, fol. 249r; and ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, Govenor of Rome, to the *capi degli ordini*, 11 Spetember 1644, fol. 571r–v.

de Cupis, who accompanied the artisans on their patrol, was particularly offended. In his report he wrote "these of low condition displayed such insolence to a man like me."[112]

These kinds of encounters between the policing authorities and the soldiers were common throughout the vacant see. The soldiers often mocked and taunted the patrols as they passed by, shouting obscenities and challenges to their members or refusing to hand over prohibited weapons.[113] In many cases these interactions could also result in death. Throughout the vacant see of 1623, the soldiers of the ambassador of Savoy committed a variety of crimes, including robbery and assault, throughout the *rione* of Ponte and the surrounding neighborhoods. On a daily basis they clashed with the patrols and the *sbirri*.[114] Later during that vacant see, the patrol of Ponte encountered four of the ambassdor's men, armed with *terzaroli*, near Piazza Navona. The patrol confiscated the weapons, arrested one of the soldiers, and proceeded to take him to the Tor di Nona with the help of the governor's *sbirri*. As they entered the strada dei Coronati, eight more Savoyard soldiers jumped them, demanding the release of their companion. When the artisans and *sbirri* refused, the soldiers fired on them, killing a young *sbirro*.[115] The episode attracted the attention of nearby crowds, who shouted obscenities at the constables and the artisans. Other vacant sees were marred by similar violent encounters between soldiers and the patrol.[116]

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112 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Francesco de Cupis, 18 July 1623, fols. 555r–556r. For a similar case in which the son of the *caporione* of Sant'Angelo was assaulted by soldiers at a tavern, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimomy of Alessandro Compagni, son of Ludovico Compagni, 7 October 1623, fols. 1326r–1328v.

113 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, 4 August 1623, fol. 690r–v; ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, 4 August 1623, fol. 789r–v; ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 7, 15 July 1655, fol. 1r–v; and ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 20, 10 February 1655, fol. 1r–v.

114 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Alberto Pasciuti, 30 July 1623. See also dispatch of the Venetian ambassador Renier Zen, ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al Senato, f. 88, 5 August 1623, fol. 532r.

115 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimomy of various artisans of the patrol, 30 July 1623, fols. 356r–361v.

116 For example, in 1644, guards stationed outside the Cancelleria of Taddeo Barberini shot an artisan serving in the patrol of Parione; see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," undated letter of Governor Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, fol. 621r. In 1655, a Corsican soldier killed a young glovemaker serving in the patrol of Trastevere as it passed their barracks near Ponte Sisto; see GRI, MS, "Il diario di Gioseffe Gualdi, 1651–1655," t. 1, fol. 23v.

Soldiers firing their guns into the air remained a constant problem. Measures in the *bandi* issued by the general of the Holy Church provided vigorous punishments for those who did this, particularly in St Peter's Square. It was something of a celebration and sometimes also a form of resistance against authority of the captain. In 1605 Giovanni and Checco, both peasants from the small village of Vignanello in northern Lazio serving as conclave guards, were arrested by papal *sbirri* for shooting their guns off as as a "joke" (*burla*) when they were called to attention in St Peter's square.[117] In 1655, although the marshal of the conclave had given rigorous orders not to shoot any guns off, Gian Maria Roviaro, an innkeeper serving among his troops, shot off a harquebus while on duty in St Peter's Square "with a great arrogance."[118] A Savelli soldier was arrested two days later for firing a harquebus near the family's palace in Ripa.[119] The undisciplined shooting of guns became such a problem that the governor of Rome had to issue harsh *bandi* against the custom in 1644 and 1655 that called for capital punishment for anyone who disobeyed.[120] These decrees were issued no doubt because gunfire outside the conclave frightened the cardinals. In 1590 and 1655, random gunshots outside the Vatican Palace disturbed the cardinals in their deliberations.[121] Moreover, random firing of guns could lead to accidental deaths and provoke rumors of a pope's election, further adding to the chaos of the vacant see.[122]

With the influx of male soldiers into an already "male city," as demographer Eugeno Sonnino has descibed early modern Rome, with its sex ratio of 140 men for every 100 women, violence against women naturally increased.[123] In his account of the vacant see of 1623, Gigli wrote that soldiers had forced

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117 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 552, testimony of Checco di Vignanello, 22 May 1605, fol. 95v.

118 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 9, testimony of Raimo Silvestro, 22 February 1655, fol. 1r.

119 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 10, testimony of various soldiers of the patrol against Giovanni Moresco Romano, 24 February 1655, fols. 1r–2r. Moresco carried a medal given to him by the marshal to carry both a harquebus and a pistol.

120 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, Govenor of Rome, to the *capi degli ordini*, 1 August 1644, fol. 513r; and "Conclave per la morte d'Innocenzo X," letter of Giulio Rospigliosi to the *capi degli ordini*, 24 January 1655, fol. 388r.

121 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 8 September 1590, fol. 461r; and ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori, Rome, f. 136, dispatch of 9 January 1655, fol. 632v.

122 ASV, Segreario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 29 July 1623, fol. 205v.

123 Sonnino, "In the Male City," pp. 20–21; and Nussdorfer, "Men at Home in Baroque Rome," pp. 103–30. For a similar demographic situation in late medieval Florence, see David Herlihy, "Some Psychological and Social Roots of Violence in the Tuscan Cities," in *Violence and Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, ed. Lauro Martines (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 145–47.

open doors and raped many women. Nevertheless, few cases of rape appear in the registers of the conservators' and governor's tribunals—no doubt because rape was an underreported crime.[124] However, kidnapping women, often equated with rape, was common. In 1585, several light horsemen of the general of the Holy Church, Giacomo Boncompagni, sought to kidnap the wife of an innkeeper near San Clemente in Monti, but the innkeeper and nearby neighbors successfully drove them away.[125] With fewer women available to them, soldiers fought over prostitutes, threatened unmarried women, and even made advances toward married women.[126] In 1644, a soldier interrupted a rival soldier having sex with a prostitute. Since he claimed that she was already "used," he sodomized her and then threatened to kill her.[127]

Women prepared for such assaults on their homes and kept their doors locked. Although prevented from entering, soldiers made strident efforts to break down the doors to their homes, often claiming to be *sbirri* or artisans of the civic patrol. These assaults generally took place at night and were accompanied by knocking and kicking at the door, as well as by the hurling of stones or the firing of guns against the door and shutters of the home. In 1623, a troop of soldiers stood outside the door of the washerwoman Olimpia Morosini, shooting off their harquebuses at the shutters of her home and yelling, "open up whore, we want your daughter."[128] In 1655, unidentified soldiers threw stones at the shutters of the prostitutes Catherina, Lucia, and Verginia while they were entertaining clients.[129]

In many ways, these assaults were similar to what Elizabeth Cohen has called "house-scornings," rituals in which men and sometimes women

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124 Elizabeth S. Cohen, "No Longer Virgins: Self-Representation by Young Women of Late Renaissance Rome," in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, eds. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca, NY, 1991), pp. 169–91; and Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 89–108.

125 Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Della Valle," p. 253.

126 For soldiers threatening a married woman, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Giovanni da Frosinone, 3 August 1623, fol. 820r.

127 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 22, testimony of Dorothea Ventura Curiale, 6 August 1644, fol. 1r.

128 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimomy of Olimpia Morosini Vedova Lavandiera, 29 July 1630, fols. 780r–782r. The men claimed to be *sbirri* of the *bargello* of Rome. For a similar example during the same vacant see, see ASR, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Vincenza Curiale, 8 July 1623, fol. 895r–v.

129 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 14, testimony of the *capotoro* of Colonna, 18 January 1655, fol. 1r.

sought to shame enemies by throwing vials of ink and stones at their doors and shutters.[130] The attacks were also attempts by these soldiers to gain entry into the dwelling of a prostitute or single woman. Usually the women lived alone and occasionally engaged in prostitution to supplement their meager incomes.[131] Beatrice Martella lodged a complaint with the governor's tribunal against a servant of the Peretti family because "while it remained the vacant see over and over he wanted to enter my house by force and because I didn't want his acquaintance as he saw me at the window in the middle of the street, he began to yell and insult me, calling me a cowardess, a bugger, and a broken-bottomed whore."[132] Eventually he forced his way into her house, but the women in the neighborhood came to Martella's aid, driving the servant away with blows. Similarly, in 1623 a band comprising fishmongers and the Cardinal of Savoy's soldiers knocked at the door of the widow Catherina Matriciana, saying, "ah, you old procuress, we are five that want to give you five fucks, you cowardly, pox-ridden whore."[133] This mixed band of youths could not force their way in, but other house-scornings proved much more violent. During the same vacant see, Felice Pomaro and some fifteen soldiers guarding the Capitol attempted to force their way into the home of a single woman and her servant. Unable to force their way into the house, they fired their muskets and handguns at her shutters.[134] Also in 1623, ten to twelve soldiers employed by the Duke of Zagarola, the nephew of the dead pope, stood outside the home of Doralice Castagna, yelling, "we want to give you a *grosso* and we want to bugger you." When Doralice refused to come out, they attempted to force the door open by firing into it about thirty times.[135]

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130 Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome," *Journal of Interdiscplinary History* 22 (1992), 597–625.

131 On the occasional nature of many prostitutes in early modern Rome, see Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, pp. 116–25. Soldiers could also bother young women still living with their families. In 1655, soldiers of Maffeo Barberini, prince of Palestrina, shot their guns at the shutters of one Susanna Mencarelli after her father had told them to stop harassing her; see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 21, testimony of Ascanio Mencarelli and various neighbors, 13 February 1655, fols. 1r–4r.

132 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 347, testimony of Beatrice Martella di Viterbo, 12 April 1605, fol. 176r.

133 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Catherina Matriciana, 19 July 1623, fol. 1547r. Catherina's neighbors corroborate her story; see fols. 1548r–1549r.

134 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Catherina di Pietro and various neighbors, 31 July–17 August 1623, fols. 1093r–1098r. Some of her neighbors testified that Felice Pomaro had more than twenty men with him.

135 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Doralice Castagna Romana and various neighbors, 27 July 1623, fols. 1532r–1535v.

Meanwhile, soldiers often supplemented their income by stealing from their captains and from the populace. Newsletter writers and diarists reported the extraordinary rise in theft and robbery during the vacant see.[136] The excessive thefts in the Vatican Palace committed by the soldiers of Bernardo Savelli, marshal of the conclave, during Sixtus V's vacant see in 1590, led the cardinals to ban his soldiers from serving at the conclave that followed the death of the short-lived papacy of Urban VII. The marshal had to reimburse the damages to the palace before his men could return to their posts.[137] Likewise, the soldiers of the Constable Colonna, stationed in the Roman Forum to protect the statue of Urban VIII in 1644, made a general menance of themselves by shooting off their harquebuses, robbing passersby, and stealing from nearby vineyards. Colonna had to send many of them back to their homes near the family's holdings in the Campagna.[138]

Much of this theft was out of necessity. Being poor and often desperate, the soldiers "lived off the land," as they were accustomed to doing on campaign. Thus, the theft of livestock and food were common, especially in this period, when misery was omnipresent and famines a common phenomenon. Soldiers stole hens, pigeons, bread, and cauliflower, among other things, from inns, markets, gardens, and vineyards.[139] The sheer poverty can be seen with the testimony of one Lorenzo Cornelio, from the small town of Mondavio in Urbino. He had come to Rome several months before the vacant see of 1623 "to earn his bread." Once Gregory XV had died, he began to serve the knight Giovanni Battista Mellini as a soldier but wandered about the city "to see the vacant see." In reality, he went about stealing bread and other items in order to survive.[140]

Besides livestock and food, soldiers pilfered items from their own barracks and looted from the city at large. In 1623 several Perugian soldiers stationed at the Vatican were arrested for stealing the tables from their barracks at the Ponte Sisto and selling them to the innkeeper of the Croce Bianca.[141] More common was the theft of horses, clothing, and jewels, all which would be resold for profit at the markets of Campo dei Fiori or among Jewish pawnbrokers in

136 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of 4 May 1605, fol. 8r.

137 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 September 1590, fol. 500r.

138 ASV, Archivio DellaValle-Del Bufalo, t. 186, "Diario di Pietro Della Valle di alcune cose notabili, 1628–1652," n. p.; entry for 3 August 1644.

139 For hens and chickens, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, 7 August 1655, fols. 151r–155v and ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 8, 19 January 1655, fol. 1r–v. For pigeons, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 13, 17 January 1655, fol. 1r–v.

140 For both quotes, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimonies of Lorenzo Cornelio da Mondavio, 13 and 14 July 1623, fols. 42v–43r and 47v–48r.

141 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 712, testimony of Elia Castelluccio da Perugia, 2 August 1623, fols. 153r–154r.

the Ghetto.[142] Some even attempted to sell items further afield. During the vacant see of Urban VII in 1590, several Perugian soldiers stole horses from their commanders, which they then tried to resell in Perugia.[143]

These soldiers thus did more harm than good, fighting among themselves, provoking altercations with the artisan patrols and the *sbirri*, and stealing from and harassing the local populace. Once removed from Rome, the situation became worse, as gangs of bandits gathered together in the hinterlands around Rome and the small villages and towns of Lazio and Umbria, where the arm of the law was too short to reach, especially during the vacant see. These men also gathered in large bands outside the confines of papal territory and its more desolate regions, such as the Maremma Marshes and the Apennine Mountains. With the coming of the vacant see these massive bands of bandits and highwaymen made their way Rome and its countryside. They came to take advantage of the temporary confusion brought on by the lack of firm leadership in the wake of the pope's death and the sequestering of the cardinals in the conclave. Although the *sbirri di compagna*, a force of fewer than fifty men, still functioned, it proved incapable of handling the massive influx of bandits that converged upon the Roman countryside. The vacant see compounded the problem of banditry during the the 1580s and 1590s, and the problem continued to plague Rome, despite the success of Clement VIII and his 17th-century successors in containing the problem.

Throughout this period, hordes of bandits customarily rushed to Rome upon hearing about the death of the pope. A newsletter of 5 September 1590 noted that while the cardinals performed the obsequies for Sixtus V and held congregations for the public order of the city, "converging toward Rome was a greater number of foreigners than has ever been seen in another vacant see."[144] Many of them entered Rome "by means of guile and force," which prompted the *capi degli ordini* to have all but the three busiest gates walled. The two-week pontificate of Urban VII that followed Sixtus's did nothing to stem the flood of bandits into the Campagna. The onset of his vacant see attracted the bandits,

142 For an example of a soldier attempting to sell stolen items to Jews in the Ghetto, see the testimony of Rainaldo da Sezze, ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 551, 18 March 1605, fol. 177v.

143 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 244, c. 38, testimony of Francesco da Perugia, Christoforo da Villa San Rinato, and Tomasso Cerone da Perugia, 17–19 December 1590, fols. 1429r–1440v. Also in 1590, the soldier Michele Bastiano da Piperno, an impoverished peasnt and bandit, stole the horse of Virginio Orsini; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 411, 21 December 1590, fol. 141r. In 1655, soldiers of Cardinal Antonio Barberini stole some horses from the stables of the barracks of the *caporione* of Monti; see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 6, testimony of the *caporione* of Monti, Angelo de Massimi, 13 January 1655, fol. 1r.

144 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 5 September 1590, fol. 453v.

as a newsletter of 6 October 1590 noted that "the bandits heard of the death of the pope, have dared to approach the walls of Rome and the other day it was necessary to send armed men to Porta Maggiore because they threatened to enter."[145] The bandits retreated from this show of force but continued to menace the countryside for the duration of the vacant see.

Rome could become a besieged city. In 1591, as Gregory XIV lay at the point of dying, seven hundred bandits led by the infamous leader Marco Sciarra marched as an army under an unfurled flag and the beating of drums from the Marches and Ascoli to Rome. The bandits had made known "that they were aware of the desperate health of the pope, and that in the vacant see they wanted to try their luck and to see what they could do."[146] The bandits seemed to bide their time waiting for the actual vacant see, when confusion regined supreme. In October when they heard that the pope had not died, they "decided to make their way slowly [to Rome] to arrive in these parts just in time for his death."[147] The bandits openly said that they wanted to sack the Ghetto of Rome but contented themselves with pillaging the villas and farmhouses of "the wealthy and greedy landowners."[148]

Although historians credit Clement VIII with curtailing outlawery in the Papal States, bandits nevertheless continued to plague Rome and the Campagna during the vacant see well into the 17th century.[149] At Clement's death in 1605, the Venetian ambassador Agostino Nani could write that "[n]ow the bandits make themselves felt, but they are mostly people, who for the happenstance of the vacant see have taken to the road."[150] In 1623 the *capi degli ordini* had to send a contingent of Corsicans toward the Orsini state of Montelibretti, where a gang of bandits had committed several outrages after Gregory XV's death.[151] And the letters exchanged between the governor of Rome and provincial

145 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 27 September 1590, fol. 72r; and BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 6 October 1590, fol. 514r.

146 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 9 October 1591, fol. 303v.

147 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 12 October 1591, fol. 309r.

148 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avvisi* of 12 October 1591, fol. 309r. Many bandits waited until the College of Cardinals was preoccupied with the election and sequestered in the conclave. A newsletter that circulated more than two weeks later noted that a gang of bandits waited until the opening of the conclave before making its way to Rome; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avvisi* of 23 October 1591, fol. 331r.

149 Fosi, *La società violenta*, pp. 195–214.

150 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 54, dispatch of 26 March 1605, fol. 53r.

151 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 5 August 1623, fol. 213v.

officials in 1644 reveal that bandits still converged on Rome at the coming of the vacant see.[152]

Banditry thus remained a perpetual problem during the vacant see. This was primarily because Roman potentates found it useful to keep bandits as henchmen and guards at their palaces. Typically, bandits gained entrance into the city with noble collusion. It was said that Cardinal Alessandro Farnese kept as many as eighty bandits at his palace near Campo dei Fiori in 1585.[153] The Colonna had at least one bandit, a Giuliano Ciagli from their fief in Marino, as palace guard.[154] Even Duke Savelli, the marshal of the Conclave, employed a bandit as the captain of his troops at the Vatican in 1591. The captain, named Alvigi Carrara Romano, was arrested along with several other bandits for carrying a small harquebus, a prohibited gun. Innocent IX, the new pope, had him arrested and, despite the protests from Savelli "that he was honest man," had him hanged.[155] The Spanish ambassador, too, could employ bandits. As late as the vacant see of 1700 he employed the captain Merolla, "exiled for life for misdeeds [committed] in the last vacant see of 1690."[156]

Many bandits returned to Rome as part of large retinues of banned nobles who returned to the city after the pope's death. Prospero Colonna, banned by Gregory XIII, returned to Rome with a large entourage of bandits after the pope's death in 1585. Gian Antonio Orsini, banned for murder a month before Gregroy XIV's death, likewise entered Rome during the same vacant see with a company of two hundred bandits, who fired their harquebuses and *terzaroli* in the air as they rode to his palace in Montegiordano.[157]

Even the state employed these bandits—ironically, to combat banditry. During the back-to-back vacant sees of 1590, the Sacred College charged

152 ASV, Conclavi, "Urbano VIII," letter of governor of Rieti of 9 August 1644, fol. 136r–v, and letter of the governor of Narni of 9 August 1655, fol. 245r.

153 Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Dalle Valle," p. 252. More than half a century later, the Savoyard agent Palleti wrote how the Colonna and other families brought men from their fiefs into the city. As a consequence, he noted, "the city is more than ever full of bandits"; see AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 54, letter of 21 August 1644, n. p.

154 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Giovanni Ciagli da Marino, 28 April 1585, fol. 53r.

155 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 6 November 1591, fol. 362r. Another bandit who came into Rome during Gregory's vacant see, one Terni da Terni, was arrested in the coach of his master, the Marchese Malatesta. As with Savelli, Malatesta protested "this affront, affirming that Terni was his gentleman, not a bandit"; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 9 November 1591, fol. 366r.

156 Valesio, *Diairo di Roma*, 1:65.

157 For Colonna in 1585, see Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Dalle Valle," p. 253. For Orsini in 1591, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 23 October 1591, fol. 331r.

Duke Virginio Orsini della Mentana to recruit two companies of bandits to fight against the bandits that infiltrated the Campagna after the death of Sixtus V. Many of them, however, deserted Orsini's company to enter Rome, where "with much courtesy, they escorted the prelates and lords."[158] A great number had once served the bandit-lord Alfonso Piccolomini and revered their former master. When Piccolomini sought to assault Orsini's fief at Mentana, half of his troops refused to help, out of loyalty to the Roman baron.[159] Bandits, often former soldiers, thus committed a great deal of violence in the countryside throughout the vacant see. A newsletter of 17 November 1590 complained that "the poor villagers are devoured by bandits, soldiers, and other wanderers who under the name of bandits and soldiers commit every evil."[160] Soldiers who patrolled the Campagna, many of whom were bandits, deserted their posts after the death of Innocent IX in 1591, saying that "everything remained in suspense and that they could do as they liked as much as they wanted."[161]

Only small groups or individual bandits, usually with the support of their patrons, were able to enter the city. The larger bands of bandits more commonly pillaged the large farms (*casali*) and villas of ecclesiastical and secular magnates that dotted the Roman countryside. In 1590, bandits looted Villa Giulia, just outside of Rome, which belonged to the family of Julius III.[162] In one week, the noble bandit Alfonso Piccolomini plundered the *casali* of the Inquisition and of a wealthy Florentine merchant. Rather than destroy what he could not take with him, he sold the grain from these *casali* to the locale populace at eight *scudi* a *rubbio* rather than the price of twelve *scudi*, to which it had risen during the famine of that autumn.[163] After the death of Clement VIII, bandits targeted his villa at Frascati and the farmhouses of the Tor di Nona.[164]

158 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 5 September 1590, fol. 453v.

159 For the *sbirri della campagna* out during the vacant see, see Blastenbrei, "La quadratura del cerchio," p. 13. For the companies under Orsini and Ghislieri, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avvisi* of 5 September and 31 October 1590, fols. 433r and 562v.

160 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 17 November 1590, fol. 593v.

161 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 28, dispatch of 11 January 1592, fol. 327r.

162 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 6 October 1590, fol. 514r.

163 BAV, Urb.alt. 1058, *avvisi* of 3 and 7 November 1590, fols. 565r and 575r.

164 For attacks on the towns of Matrice and Fara in Lazio, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, a*vvisi* of 15 and 18 January 1592, fols. 15v and 43r. For attacks on the Umbrian towns Amelia and Orti, not far from the border with Lazio, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 14 November 1590, fol. 600r. For bandits near Frascati and the *casali* of the Tor di Nona, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 5 March 1605, fol. 1124r.

In addition to looting *casali*, bandits also held them for ransom by threatening to burn them down. Throughout the vacant see of Sixtus V, bandits under Piccolomini threatened to burn the *casali* of Camilla Peretti, his sister, if she did not pay them 2000 *scudi*. After the death of Urban VII, they raised the amount to 6000 *scudi*. The pope's sister was not the only one to suffer the extortions of the bandits after the deaths of Sixtus V and Urban VII. Bandits also ransomed the *casali* of the Cesi and the Cevoli.[165] By the end of the vacant see, emboldened by the prolonged lack of effective leadership, they began hitting all the *casali* of the Campagna so that "out of fear, the Cevoli and other wealthy families of Rome send the bandits money, clothes, food, and other refreshments."[166] Nobles and merchants who refused to pay saw their farms burned and their livestock shot. In the vacant see of Urban VII (1590), bandits burned the farm of a wood merchant because he refused to pay them three hundred *scudi*.[167]

Bandits also robbed travelers, particularly the messengers of various Italian and European states who carried news of the papal election to their governments.[168] Newsletter writers and Venetian ambassadors lamented the misfortunes of these messengers, especially the Venetian couriers, who were often waylaid. A newsletter of 3 November 1590 commented in frustration that "the couriers of Venice for some time were all killed [by bandits], except this week."[169] Even Spain and its allies, rumored throughout the autumn of 1590 to be fostering banditry in the Papal States, saw their messengers robbed by highwaymen.[170] Wealthy travelers were also seized, not only for the money on their person, but also for the ransoms that the bandits could extract from their relatives. Highwaymen ransomed a Polish gentleman for 3000 *scudi*. Fifteen years later they again pestered the Roman countryside, as bandits kidnapped two customs merchants as they went to inspect the spring sowing.

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165 For the ransoming of Camilla Peretti's *casali*, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avvisi* of 6 October and 21 November 1590, fols. 514r and 606v. For the *casali* of the Cesi and Cevoli, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avvisi* of 6 October and 14 November 1590, fols. 514r and 590r.

166 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 1 December 1590, fol. 624r.

167 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 8 December 1590, fol. 632v.

168 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 October 1591, fol. 309r.

169 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 3 Novermber 1590, fol. 565r. For other attacks on the Venetian courier, see ibid., *avviso* of 20 October 1590, fol. 521r, and the dispatch of the Venetian ambassador Alberto Badoer, ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 27 October 1590, fol. 145r.

170 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 1 December 1590, fol. 625r. In one week, messengers from Naples and Genoa as well as an extradorinary one from Madrid were all robbed on the roads to Rome. For attacks on messengers from other states and potentates, see the *avvisi* of 28 November and 5 December 1590, fols. 621r and 632r.

Sbirri arrested them before they could obtain a 1000-*scudi* ransom from the merchants.[171] Ordinary people, too, could be seized for ransom; in the long vacant see of 1590, a large troop of 150 bandits entered Rome, kidnapping many people and holding them for ransom in the vineyards outside the city walls.[172]

The prelates who took part or served in the conclave had much to fear from a bandit attack. For protection, cardinals had to travel to the conclave in well-guarded trains. In 1585, Cardinal d'Este was carried in a sedan to the conclave from Tivoli accompanied by an army of three hundred.[173] Five years later the cardinal-legate of Perugia was only able to make it to Rome to participate in the conclave of 1590 with an escort of soldiers sent by the Grand Duke of Tuscany to protect him from the bandits of the Romagna who roamed the roads between Florence and Rome.[174] Other prelates were not so fortunate. More than a month later, a band of fifty bandits chased a group of monsignors that included members of the prominent Vitelli, della Corgnia, and Cesi families to the walls of Rome, with hopes of a ransom.[175] A year later, during the vacant see of Gregory XIV, sixteen bandits stopped a train of forty people near Terracina, capturing the archbishop of Rossano and the nephew of the Cardinal Iñigo d'Avalos d'Aragona, who alone fetched a 5000-*scudi* ransom.[176]

The vacant see certainly did not cause banditry, whose deep roots were found in papal authorities' practice of exiling criminals and the ubiquitous poverty of the early modern era. However, the vacant see can be said to have stimulated the activity of bandits in the Papal States. Scholars have noted a resurgence of banditry from the second half of the 16th century throughout the Papal States and Italy. Although Sixtus V quelled banditry in the Papal States, near his death it began to grow again as famine and spiraling debt gripped the lands of the popes.[177] The resurgence of banditry in the 1590s coincided with a period of four vacant sees that were almost continous in the years 1590–91. Two of the popes, Urban VII and Innocent IX, ruled less than a month before succumbing to illnesses, while the feeble Gregory XIV failed to provide strong leadership throughout his reign of ten months. The lack of a strong leader

171 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 26 March 1605, fol. 145v.

172 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 28 November 1590, fol. 521r.

173 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 13 April 1585, fol. 171v.

174 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 5 September 1590, fol. 453v.

175 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 17 November 1590, fol. 595r.

176 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 30 October 1591, fol. 347v.

177 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:542–43; and Carvale and Caracciolo, *Lo Stato pontificio*, pp. 342–46.

certainly allowed for banditry to flourish. Only at the end of Clement VIII's pontificate was the epidemic curtailed.

Newsletter writers connected the lack of leadership to the rise of banditry throughout these years of almost perpetual vacant see. A newsletter of 3 November 1590 lamented that "[w]hile the cardinals remain divided in the conclave for the election of the Pope, the bandits at every turn stay united to do the worst that they can."[178] Another newsletter a week later recollected the strong leadership under previous popes, when "this poor state, which at other times, had been reputed fortunate and envied under the Pope, now is reputed to be more miserable than some other state under an Absolute Prince."[179] The bandits had become "masters of the Campagna," and Gregory XIV's reign from December 1590 to October 1591 did nothing to prevent the growth of banditry.[180] In fact, newsletter writers openly wrote that one could not tell if the papal seat "were vacant or full" during his pontificate.[181] When bandits returned to the Roman countryside at the death of Innocent IX, a newsletter concluded that "on account of the so many vacant sees, Rome and the entire Papal States are all but destroyed."[182]

The papacy never had a firm monopoly on violence over its subjects, even in its very capital. Severe popes, such as Pius V and Sixtus V, implemented measures to control the violence, but they could never eradicate its roots, which were grounded in the proclivity of Romans, especially the nobility, to carry arms. The police of Rome could not tame the private forces of cardinals, nobles, and ambassadors. The vacant see only exacerbated the tendency of the populace to walk about armed. With the lack of a strong leader and a tradition of self-help (which will be discussed in the next chapter), commoners and elites armed themselves out of fear of violence. Prelates and magnates took further precautions by increasing the number of guards that they kept at their palaces. The *capi degli ordini* also sought to project strength by augmenting the meager forces in the city with mercernary soldiers. Not unsurprisingly, this influx of soldiers, further fed by poor men throughout the provinces, only served to increase the level of violence. This scenario was repeated at every vacant see, demonstrating that the papacy was far from being the absolute power that historians Jean Delumeau and Paolo Prodi depicted it to be.[183] Moreover, the

178 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 3 November 1590, fol. 565r.

179 BAV, Urb.lat. *avviso* of 17 November 1590, fol. 593v.

180 BAV, Urb.lat. *avviso* of 28 November 1590, fol. 621r.

181 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 16 October 1591, fol. 319v.

182 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 18 January 1592, fol. 37r.

183 Delumeau, "Le progrès," pp. 399–410; and Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 37–58.

four vacant sees from 1590 to 1592 show that the vacant see could create a true crisis of authority within the papacy. These years saw a resurgence of banditry throughout the Papal States, particularly around Rome, as outlaws sought to take advantage of the prolonged absence of a pope. Near the end of his reign, Clement VIII restored order in the Papal States through the creation of the "Buon Governo," a magistracy that sought to better regulate relations between the capital and the local governments of the provinces. Nevertheless, both in the capital and its countryside, the vacant see continued to be marked by violence and lawlessness throughout the 17th century. Poorly governed while the pope lived, Rome and the Papal States witnessed an execeptional spike in violence and disorder in his absence.

CHAPTER 4

Violence and Vengeance in the Vacant See

One early afternoon on 29 July 1644, Francesco Bonafede walked to the market before the Pantheon to buy lettuce for his dinner. As he passed the former pagan temple, a servant of an unnamed magnate attacked him. Before stabbing Francesco three times with a dagger, the assailant shouted, "Now it's the vacant see, it's time to settle things between us."[1] In the subsequent trial we learn why the unknown attacker assaulted Francesco. Apparently, he was hired by his neighbors, three Corsican prostitutes, with whom Francesco had been involved in a long-standing argument. As Urban VIII grew ill, the tensions between the neighborhood rivals simmered to a boil. The day before Urban VIII's death, Francesco insulted the three women by calling them whores, sluts, and "used flowers," and professing a desire "to cut their faces" in revenge for a undefined (due to the fragmentary nature of the trial) slight.[2] The prostitutes, however, acted before Francesco could keep his promise, since, as we have seen, he was assaulted the very afternoon of the Barberini pope's death.

Each vacant see, this scenario played itself out in the streets and squares of Rome. Romans, who had postponed getting revenge against enemies, neighbors, and associates, took advantage of the cessation of law and justice to enact their own brand of violent self-help. Disagreements over money and property as well neighborhood and personal hatreds, simmering for months and sometimes even years, boiled over into acts of revenge. Rome became a community united in collective hatred, a community in which normal modes of social control were replaced by aggression and violence.

The vacant see, like Carnival and other festive occasions of misrule, provided Romans with an outlet for pent-up emotions. But unlike Carnival, where laughter and excess took center stage, during the vacant see hatred and vengeance dominated the thoughts of Romans.[3] In the wake of the pope's death, individuals placed personal agendas over the rule of law and the needs

1 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 164, testimonies of Francesco Bonafede and his father-in-law Giovan Battista, 29 and 30 July 1644, fol. 1r–v.

2 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 164, testimony of Madalena da Corsica, 31 July 1644, fol. 2v.

3 On Carnival and festive misrule, see Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*; Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 178–204; Davis, "Reasons of Misrule," pp. 97–123; and Humphrey, *The Politics of Carnival*. On the potential for violence at Carnival, see Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*; and Le Roy Ladurie, *The Carnival in Romans*.

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of the community. The vacant see was a cathartic but fleeting and liminal moment in which pent-up needs for vengeance could be unleashed.[4] It provided Romans with a unique opportunity to settle scores, thereby attenuating the number of usual violent altercations.

However, in the absence of the leviathan, Rome did not descend into a Hobbesian "war of everyman against everyman."[5] The violence of the vacant see followed its own rules, which attenuated the bloodshed. First, the Romans who sought revenge tended to store up their grudges, releasing them at the news of the pope's death. Second, they performed their revenge following a ritual script that oftentimes tamped down the violence. They used physical punishment to pay their enemies back for money owed or imagined slights; however, this punishment took the form of name-calling, beatings, and scarring that publicly broadcasted the righting of wrongs but did not always intend to kill the enemies. Rather, the goal of avengers was to humiliate their enemies as publicly as possible before the community. The vacant see was thus a privileged time for Romans to win back honor previously lost while the papal tribunals temporarily shut down. It was a privileged time in which Romans practiced violent self-help rather than using legal means or community interaction to solve disagreement and differences.

Waiting for Vengeance

By the 16th century, postponing vengeance against enemies until the pope's death had become a long-established tradition. Rooted in the cessation of the papal courts and laws that accompanied the vacant see, this tradition was never codified in writing. Rather, it was a right that Romans claimed for themselves. Although there is no clear moment dating the provenance of this tradition, as early as 1534 Cellini could depict in his memoirs that Pompeo de' Capitaneis intentionally sought vengeance against him during Clement VII's vacant see.[6] The tradition may have developed in the course of the 15th century,

4 On liminality, see Turner, *The Ritual Process*. On catharsis and violence, see Paul Heeles, "Anthropology, Violence and Catharsis," in *Aggression and Violence*, eds. Peter Marsh and Anna Campbell (Oxford, 1982), pp. 47–61.

5 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, 1994), p. 77. Taking advantage of the death of the pope was enshrined in a pasquinade, probably based on a popular proverb, issued during Leo X's *sede vacante*, that read: "there being no cat, the mice play." See Valerio Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento* (Rome, 1983), 1:286.

6 Benvenuto Cellini, *La vita* (Florence, 1938), pp. 183–84.

when Roman nobles took advantage of the vacant see to resist the efforts of popes to assert their authority over the city. By 1667 the satirist Gregorio Leti could write,

> the disorders which are many times very great, proceeding hence, that such as those who have been harshly or injuriously dealt with, during the precedent papacies, do for the most part defer their resentments thereof to the next vacant see, so that it happens many murthers [*sic*] and assassinations be committed.[7]

The tradition of delaying revenge until the vacant see can be seen with the words Romans shouted at each other upon assaulting enemies. After Gregory XV's death in 1623 Giovanni Battista de Alberi made his way to the Vatican "to see the conclave"; a servant of the gentleman Giovanni Battista d'Asti, with whom Alberi had had a fight before the death of Gregory XV, stabbed him twice, crying out, as Francesco's attacker had done, "Now that it's the vacant see."[8] Antonio Pissero, whom the *caporioni* had freed from jail at the same vacant see, immediately went to the house of Menica Franchi, where he shouted, "Now my time has come" and "I want to avenge myself" at his enemy. Franchi had had him tried and jailed for debt before the pope's death.[9] The call, "Now my time has come" or "Now it's the vacant see" seemed to have been a battle cry that Romans hurled at their "victims" before attacking—a cry probably shouted more than sources say.[10]

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7 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 21.

8 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Giovanni Battista de Alberi, 19 July 1623, fol. 420r.

9 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Menica Franchi, wife of Agostino Franchi, testimonies of 11 and 13 July 1623, fols. 886r and 942r.

10 Myriad examples exist; at the beginning of Gregory XV's vacant see, Angelo Palmolino went to the house of one Luciola to demand money he had loaned her—itself an act of personal justice—where he was met by her friend, Annibale Rotta, a servant of the ambassador of Ferrara, who threatened him with a gun, telling him that "Now it's the vacant see"; see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Angelo Palmolino d'Amelia, 12 July 1623, fol. 423r. In the same vacant see, Marco Antonio Pennacchia, estranged from his mother, Angela, threatened to kill her, shouting, "Now it's the vacant see"; see ibid., testimony of Angela Pennacchia, 10 July 1623, fol. 1290r. Another example involved two rival prostitutes: Urania and her lover Giuseppe assaulted her rival, one Madalena. As Giuseppe grabbed her by the throat, he yelled, "I want to settle things between us now that it's the vacant see." See ASR, TCS, b. 196, c. 4, testimony of Madalena, 15 January 1655, fol. 1r. Also in 1655, the basket-weaver Domenico threatened the rabbi Abram for

Despite early modern moralists' condemnation of revenge as "a kind of wild justice," to borrow Francis Bacon's phrase, it was seldom a spontaneous affair. As the cliché goes, the revenge of the vacant see was a dish served cold, accomplished long after the initial incident that had provoked feelings of resentment and outrage. Disputes between Romans that led to violent revenge had their origins anywhere from a few days before the death of the pope to several years in the past. The average delay was around a year. For example, Olimpia Collarara and her husband Gian Paolo affixed horns—a popular symbol besmirching the sexual honor of the household—on the door of their neighbors after a year of continuous arguments, which had originated from the latter's filing a lawsuit against a friend.[11] Even incidents that appear trivial could ignite the passion for revenge: when the *caporione* of Regola asked Gian Paolo Balsano why Giacinto Carraria slashed him with a sword as he leaned against the wall of a tavern during the interregnum, the only explanation he could give him was that "one time around a year ago I shouted at Giacinto because he had said that my mother was a whore and a witch."[12] Others had a much longer provenance. One of the most famous cases is that of Benvenuto Cellini, who wrangled for two long years with court rival Pompeo de' Capitaneis over the position of papal minter. Three days after Clement VII's death in 1534, as Cellini would have it, his adversary with a posse of ten armed men sought to provoke him as he sat in the Banchi with his friends. Unfortunately for Pompeo, Cellini proved quicker at drawing his dagger and killed him with a wound to

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money the rabbi owed. He, too, shouted the battle cry of "it's the vacant see"; see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 19, testimony of Abram Sacerdote, 7 February 1655, fol. 1r–v.

11 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Olimpia Massimi [against Olimpia and Giuseppe Collarara], 2 August 1623, fol. 476r.

12 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 3, testimony of Gian Paolo Balsano, 19 January 1655, fol. 1r–v. For other substantial delays in seeking vengeance, see TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Ruggero Delfino, 16 July 1623, fol. 328r [at least three months]; testimony of Menica Franchi, 11 July 1623, fol. 942r [several months]; and testimony of Orintia, wife of DomenicoVannoli, 28 July 1623, fol. 1389r [three months]. Processi, b. 147, c. 164, testimony of Madalena da Corsica, fol. 2v, 31 July 1644 [almost a year]. Processi, b. 196, c. 1, testimony of Bartolomeo Torciatti, 17 January 1655, fol. 1r [two months] and testimony of Andrea Berganzono, c. 9, 17 February 1655, fol. 1r [a year and a half]. For other delays, two years or longer, see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 122, testimony of Paolo Martani da Palestrina, 23 January 1566, fols. 138v–139r [two years]; Costituti, vol. 344, testimony of Agnolo Arigucci, 1 July 1585, fols. 43v–44r [six years]; Costituti, vol. 552, testimony of Jacomo Bernardi da Jesi, 23 May 1605 [two years]; Investigazioni, vol. 112, testimony of Francesco Cremonese, 11 May 1572, fol. 33r [two years]; and Investigazioni, vol. 224, testimony of Giovanni Maria Coroni, 30 November 1590, fol. 4r [four or five years].

the head.[13] The muleteer Angelo Matteo da Cavi, fined five *scudi* by a customs official for evading a tariff on the wine that he brought into Rome, waited until Alexander VII's vacant see of 1667—three years later—before seeking vengeance against the official.[14] The longest delay in seeking revenge occurred in the vacant see of 1644. The priest Francesco Marchier, whose election as vicar of the Church and Hospital of Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi in 1635 was nullified by the order of the church, simmered for nine years. With Urban VIII's interregnum, he acted on his desire for vengeance, leading a troop of fifty men armed with harquebuses to the church in order to assault the abbot and seize its treasury.[15]

In the days and months leading up to the pope's death, many sought to intimidate those who had wronged them. These threats intensified as the pope slipped toward death. Not forgetting the fine imposed on him three years earlier by Jacomo Nanzi, the muleteer Angelo da Cavi sought out the customs official three months before the sickly Alexander VII died and threatened him by saying "come the vacant see" and by "biting his finger."[16] Jacomo asserted that with these words and actions Angelo threatened to kill him. When Alexander VII did die three months later, Angelo accosted him in Piazza San Marco with two armed youths, grabbing him by the arm and telling him that "certain youths want to talk to you."[17] Jacomo wrestled free from the thugs and fled, reporting the crime to the conservators' tribunal. Several days before the vacant see of Paul IV, an unnamed apprentice of the card-maker Antonio Mangione repeatedly passed before the shop of a rival card-maker Bartolomeo da Tortona and, in Bartolomeo's words, "began to taunt me," calling him a "cripple and many

13 Cellini, *La vita*, pp. 183–84.

14 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 242, testimony of Jacomo Antonio Nanzi, 25 May 1667, fol. 74r–v.

15 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," undated letter of the governor of Rome, Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, to the Sacred College [the attack took place on 11 August 1644], fol. 683r. Teodoro Ameyden briefly mentioned this incident in his diary; see BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma notato da Deone hora temi Dio," fols. 66v–67r.

16 Biting one's finger is a clear sign of a threat that expresses that "one wishes to devour one's enemy in the same way as one is now attempting to devour one's fingers." See Andrea de Jorio, *Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity*, trans. Adam Kendon (Bloomington, Ind., 2000), p. 278. This is Kendon's translation of the scholar and cleric de Jorio's *La mimica degli antichi investigata nel gestire napoletano* of 1832.

17 For all quotes, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 242, testimony of Jacomo Antonio Nanzi, 25 May 1667, fol. 74v.

other words" as well as unsheathing his dagger.[18] Once the vacant see had commenced, Mangione's and Bartolomeo's apprentices clashed in a swordfight that left one man dead. In the days before Gregory XV died, one Ludovico Pitiso shouted insults outside the door of his "enemy," the priest Clemente Brumani, before attacking him during the interregnum.[19] A day before the same vacant see, Bartolomeo, a servant of Signor Ludovico Ragazzi, went to the shop of the tailor Gian Pietro Cerrone, where he challenged and threatened one of his apprentices. When Gian Pietro told Bartolomeo to go away, the servant left but now threatened the master, telling him "a time would come to show him a thing or two."[20] True to his word, in the first week of the vacant see, Bartolomeo stabbed the tailor with a dagger as he walked along the Strada de' Pontefici.

As these examples demonstrate, many Romans found satisfaction in deferring their immediate desires to seek vengeance against hated foes. In this regard, they had much in common with the hardy farmers and warriors of Icelandic sagas, who believed that "the longer vengeance is drawn out the more satisfying it will be."[21] Relishing a protracted vengeance, Romans bided their time and used intimidation to signal potential future retribution for real and imagined slights. Once the threat of a vacant see drew near, the avenger made his imminent retaliation known to his victim.

As a consequence, with the advent of the vacant see, Romans prepared for the attacks from their enemies. Despite prohibitions promulgated by the conservators and governor of Rome, fear of retaliation caused Romans to arm themselves with mail shirts, swords, and guns. Upon hearing of the illness of Clement VII, Cellini's rival at the papal court, Pompeo de' Capitaneis, hired a troop of Neapolitan soldiers to accompany him throughout the city.[22] As we have seen with the previous chapter, the Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo painted a similar picture of trepidation in his description of the interregnum of Paul III in 1549.[23] Dandolo equated the inadequacy of papal justice in the interregnum and the prevalence of violent self-help with the lawlessness of Friuli, a region of northeastern Italy known for its internecine feuds that

18 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 67, testimony of Bartolomeo Cartaro da Tortona, 17 March 1560, fol. 80v.

19 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Dom Clemente Brumani, 12 July 1623, fol. 230r.

20 ASR, TCS, Processi b. 67, testimony of Gian Pietro Cerrone, 13 July 1623, fols. 1350r–1351r.

21 William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990), p. 193; and idem, *Eye for an Eye* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), pp. 140–45.

22 Cellini, *La vita*, p. 183.

23 Dispatch from Matteo Dandolo, 13 November 1549, in *CSP*, 5:276.

Venice had recently pacified. Ten years later, Alvise Mocenigo described the vacant see of Paul IV in comparable terms, writing that "everyone remained suspicious . . . and few cared to go about alone during the day, or in the time of night with others."[24] Indeed, armed men intercepted by the *caporioni* and their patrols commonly excused themselves by claiming that they carried the arms for protection.

There was much to fear, as the announcement of the pope's death saw an abrupt spate of assaults and murders. In the days following the pope's death enemies tracked each other down. Mindful that time was short, most men must have hurried to strike, since few early modern papal interregna lasted more than a month, many not even reaching two weeks.[25] Nevertheless, many avengers opted to delay their acts of vengeance until the closing of the conclave. The governor of Rome, Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, wrote the Sacred College that the former vicar of Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi waited until the cardinals "were shut in the conclave" to take part in the election before launching his assault on the church.[26] The Milanese gentleman Alessandro Posterla also waited for the cardinals to gather in the conclave before acting on his plans for revenge against a rival gentleman. Posterla even hired several guards of the conclave as assassins.[27] No doubt many waited for the conclave to begin, since the cardinals' absence left the city without a strong political authority. Thus, the Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Priuli, noting fewer murders than usual were committed after the death of Gregory XIII, speculated, "If the conclave lasts longer than usual, there could well occur many crimes."[28]

Why did Romans wait until the vacant see, when they could seek vengeance against an opponent at any time? Venetian ambassadors, as we have seen,

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24 "Relazione di Luigi [Alvise] Mocenigo, 1560," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38–39.

25 In the period 1559–1655, interregna lasting about a month included those of Sixtus V, Innocent IX, Clement VIII, Gregory XV, and Urban VIII. Those lasting about two weeks include Pius IV, Pius V, Gregory XIII, Gregory XIV, Paul V, and Leo XI. Vacant sees lasting longer than a month included those of Paul IV (four and half months), Urban VII (two and half months), and Innocent X (three months). Paul IV was the longest vacant see in the early modern period until those of Clement IX of 1669–70 (almost five months) and Alexander VIII of 1691 (a little more than five months).

26 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," fol. 683r.

27 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 110, c. 12, testimony of Alessandro Posterla, 19 March 1566, fols. 717v–718r.

28 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 19, dispatch of 12 April 1585, fol. 100r.

thought the answer lay with the breakdown of law in Rome and the reduced presence of papal policing authorities. This can only partially explain the actions of Romans. Gregorio Leti, in fact, maintained:

> [n]ot but that justice is very severely administered at that time, and with greater expedition, than at any other; but of the mutherers [*sic*] and other mischievous persons be not surpriz'd in the very facts, and can make a shift to abscond themselves and keep out of the way till the creation of a new pope, they return to their habitations as if they had committed those crimes in some other countrey [*sic*].[29]

Leti's passage demonstrates that many Romans took advantage of the vacant see to perform their own forms of "wild justice," despite the threat of severe punishment from the judicial authorities of the papal interregnum and the pope and his administration upon his ascension to the throne. There was no general amnesty for crimes committed at the vacant see.[30] The conservators and the *caporioni* arrested and punished wrongdoers during the vacant see; and with the election of a pope, the governor of Rome resumed his judicial activities in full and investigated recent crimes with the help of spies and witnesses. Time did not protect the criminal; nor did it soften justice's sword. Years after their misdeeds, many avengers admitted to their crimes under torture before the governor's judges. In 1566, during an interrogation regarding a different crime and seventeen years after the deed, Bastiano Nardi di Norma confessed to shooting an enemy at Paul III's vacant see.[31]

Romans, however, had grown accustomed to the cessation of the governor's tribunal and the ineffectiveness of the civic patrols. Seeking to harm her on the first day of the vacant see, the son of Angela Pennacchia ignored an order

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29 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 21–22.

30 Pius IV issued a bull that absolved the *Popolo Romano* of any wrongdoing for its actions in the assaults against the monuments of the Carafa that took place in Paul IV's vacant see. But this was unusual. Typically popes could issue pardons for individuals, as could several confraternities on the Assumption. For Pius IV's bull, which was entitled *Absolutionis excessum Populi Romani*, see ASV, Bandi Sciolti, Serie I, vol. 1, bull of 15 May 1560, p. 49. For confraternities' ability to absolve criminals, see Paolo L. Rossi, "The Writer and the Man: Real Crimes and Mitigating Circumstances: *Il caso Cellini*," in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Trevor Dean and Katherine Lowe, (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), p. 167.

31 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 104, c. 11, testimony of Bastiano Nardi da Norma, fols. 713r–743r; for his confession, see fols. 753r–754v.

of the governor not to enter her house, "under the pain of the galleys."[32] While performing a house-scorning before the house of the widow Menica Aganti and her nubile daughter, a young servant of the auditor of the University of Rome family shouted, "I am not afraid of the senator or the *caporioni*." One witness stated that he said, "I am not afraid of these whores or of the governor."[33] Butio Tasca and Ascanio Guidotto displayed the same attitude when they threw stones and took shots with harquebuses at the shutters of a widow with two marriageable daughters. When one of the young women yelled at them to stop harassing them, they responded, "Go tell it to Cardinal Aldobrandini [i.e. the cardinal chamberlain]," implying forcefully that they had little respect for official justice of the interregnal authorities.[34]

Romans profoundly disdained the *sbirri* and treated them with scorn and contempt since they generally came from the ranks of bandits, thugs, and other petty criminals, more apt to cheat and rob than to protect and to defend.[35] Moreover, Romans believed that the *sbirri* should stop patrolling the streets during the vacant see and became irked when the governor or *bargello* ordered them to keep on working. By unwritten tradition, with the cessation of pope's authority, the governor's *sbirri* ceased making their rounds until the cardinals elected a successor. In the place of the *sbirri*, the civic patrols of Rome's fourteen *rioni*, composed of artisans and shopkeepers and led by the gentlemen and nobles of the *Popolo Romano*, maintained peace and quiet. Romans felt this task and honor belonged to the artisan patrols (or, more realistically, to themselves) and assaulted the *sbirri* as they made their rounds, as testified by the governor's many *bandi* that promised the gallows to anyone who assaulted them. Regardless, the trials of the conservators' tribunals of 1623

32 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Angela Pennachia, 10 July 1623, fols. 1290r–1291v. On house-scorning, see Cohen, "Honor and Gender," pp. 597–625.

33 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 4, testimony of Menica Argenti, 5 March 1655, fol. 1r, and testimony of Angela Preta Piemontese, 5 March 1655, fol. 2r.

34 ASR, TCG, Processi (17th cen.), b. 46, c. 6, testimony of Prudentia, daughter of Giulia da Paliano, 3 May 1605, fol. 384r.

35 On the reputation of the *sbirri*, see Hughes, "Fear and Loathing," pp. 97–116. It was often difficult for Romans to distinguish criminals from the *sbirri*. During the vacant see of Pius IV in 1566, a servant of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, arrested for carrying an unlicensed sword, fled the police because he feared "they might be thieves or bandits"; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 122, testimony of Giovan Angelo, 23 December 1565, fol. 72r. On the Roman distrust and dislike of the *sbirri*, see Peter Blastenbrei, "Violence, Arms, and Criminal Justice in Papal Rome, 1560–1600," *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006), 68–87.

and 1655 abound with verbal and physical confrontations between *sbirri* and Romans of all ranks.[36]

An altercation preserved in the governor's tribunal exemplifies the Roman *omertà*. In 1605, the *bargello* and his men arrested several artisans who had been fighting in a tavern near Piazza di Trinità dei Monti. The *bargello* and the *sbirri* placed three brawlers in manacles and led them to the prisons at the Tor di Nona. When the group entered the Piazza di Trinità, one of the prisoners, Battista the Baker, began to shout at the *caporione* of Campo Marzio and his patrol. His words are telling. He yelled out, "It is the vacant see! The vacant see! Help! Help! We are being killed! What Spanish justice is this?"[37] These words implied that the *sbirri* were acting unlawfully and that only the *caporione* and his men had the right to police the streets with the advent of the vacant see. The *caporione* then stopped the *sbirri* and, at gunpoint, demanded the prisoners "be placed in his power" so that he could take them to the Capitoline jails.[38] Although the College of Cardinals the next day told the *Popolo Romano* to return the prisoners to the *bargello* and his *sbirri*, the people of Rome had rallied to Battista and the *caporione*. Battista's screams had alerted not only the *caporion*e but also "un mondo" of people who turned up armed with knives, swords, sticks, and stones.[39] The crowd threatened the *bargello* and his men until they released the prisoners.

All sorts of agendas related to the vacant see can be found in this episode. The prisoners, as a last resort, took advantage of the time to elicit help from the *caporione*, the patrol, and the people in Piazza Borghese. The *caporione*, for his part, proved to be more interested in protecting his jurisdictional authority than in the actual fate of the prisoners. Meanwhile, the members of the patrol forcefully asserted their authority against the *sbirri* by quickly freeing the prisoners and calling the people to arms by means of drums. The people, armed with a variety of makeshift weapons, took up the call and surrounded the *sbirri*.[40] The reaction of the people not only frightened the *sbirri* but also

36 For these altercations, which include insults and throwing stones and other objects from windows and doors, see John M. Hunt, "Violence and Disorder in the Sede Vacante of Early Modern Rome, 1559–1655," doctoral dissertation (Columbus, Ohio State University, 2009), pp. 234–45.

37 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 46 (17th cen.), c. 8, testimony of various *sbirri* and witnesses, fols. 437r–v, 458r, 459r, and 493r. For more on this episode, see Hunt, "Violence and Disorder in the Sede Vacante," pp. 242–45. For a similar episode in the vacant see of 1559, see Cohen and Cohen, *Words and Deeds*, p. 77.

38 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 46 (17th cen.), c.8, fol. 427r.

39 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 46 (17th cen.), c. 8, fol. 488v.

40 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 46 (17th cen.), c. 8, fols. 427r, 428r, 432r, 437r–v, and 458r.

demonstrated the intrinsic anger of the populace toward the papal police when its members violated unspoken rules of the vacant see by attempting to execute the law.

The Motives Behind Vengeance

Motivating these acts of vengeance were disputes over money, property, and material items, as well as less tangible commodities, such as honor and love. Moreover, the Venetian ambassador Alvise Mocenigo related that many of the murders sprang from disputes over inheritance.[41] For example, two brothers from Narni clashed over a fat inheritance of 5000 *scudi*. After the vacant see of Gregory XIII, Gian Battista Massari testified that his half-brother brother Ennio, "having sought by all the means possible to have and enjoy the inheritance," had "many times wished to kill him in the city of Narni."[42] Gian Battista had taken his case to Rome, where he served as a retainer of Cardinal Sermoneta and helped guard his palace after Gregory XIII died. Ennio came to Rome with ten men to kill his brother. Finding him before the door of the cardinal's palace on Via Botteghe Oscure, they menaced Gian Battista with their wheel-lock harquebuses and swords but respected the *franchigia*, or area that surrounded the palaces of cardinals, ambassadors, and other foreign dignitaries.[43]

Since ongoing legal proceedings were temporarily closed, Romans believed longstanding disputes over inheritances could be settled with violence at the onset of the vacant see. This mentality can be seen with an incident that occurred in 1565, at the vacant see of Pius IV. Bernardino Pichi dal Borgo San Sepulchro and his brother, Ubertino, had long disputed with officials and notaries over two houses located on the Vicolo del Pavone that they claimed to have inherited from an Ottaviano Terni. One year earlier, armed with documents, they tried unsuccessfully to claim the houses. The very night that Pius IV died,

41 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38.

42 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimony of Gian Battista Massari, 30 April 1585, fols. 145v–146r. Parts of the case can also be found in ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, testimony of Ennio Massari da Narni, 14 May 1585, fols. 94r–95v. The vacant see also provided an opportunity for litigants clashing over ecclesiastical benefices to settle scores. In a fragment case found in the governor's tribunal one Bastiano Tommasini da Ripa Transone assaulted a priest named Matteo Corasi, who had taken his brother to court over the monastery of San Rustico in Ripa Transone (a small town in the Marches); see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 122, testimonies of 20 and 22 January 1566, fols. 106v–108r and 110v–112r.

43 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, fol. 146r, see also the testimony of Gian Battista's fellow guards, fols. 148r–151r.

on 9 December 1566, the Pichi brothers gathered five or six friends and relatives, also from Borgo San Sepulchro, who, armed with mailed jackets, swords, and daggers, tried to take possession of one of the houses.[44] Once they arrived before the house, they threw stones at the official of the Apostolic Chamber, the papal treasury, charged with watching over it. Bernardino Pichi told him that "I am the owner of this house and I want to stay here in my house. I want you to leave."[45] The official responded, as if anticipating Pichi's argument about the vacant see: "I don't know any owner other than the pope, if he lives. I have not heard clearly about his death and if the pope is dead, I know of no other owner than the Apostolic Chamber."[46] Bernardino replied that the officials of the Apostolic Chamber "had robbed the honor, possessions, and life" of Ottaviano Terni and "now they wanted to kill the poor devil he designated as his heir."[47] The Pichi promised to cut the official to pieces, but the *caporione* of Ponte and his patrol intervened to keep the peace.

During the vacant see, disputes over debts figured heavily in the records of the conservators' tribunal and the governor's tribunal. Renata Ago has noted the ubiquity in early modern Rome of informal networks of credit among merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans. To get by, impoverished Romans frequently had to borrow both money and material on trust. Artisans and shopkeepers sold goods on credit and tolerated late payments to avoid disrupting relations with clients. This network of credit and exchange bound Romans together but could lead to both litigation and violence.[48]

Starting from the second half of the 16th century, tension and conflict increasingly marked relations between creditors and debtors. Jean Delumeau called the problem an economic plague. Between 1550 and 1700, more and more Romans, particularly the working poor, fell deeper into debt. Unable to retrieve their loans, creditors sued debtors, and thereby filled Rome's jails. Between January 1582 and January 1583, almost 6000 workers—6 per cent of Rome's population—found themselves in prison for debt. This group was primarily composed of poor artisans—blacksmiths, shoemakers, and

44 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 108 (16th cen.), c. 36, testimony of Giulio Antonio de Angelis, 8 January 1566, fols. 721r–725v; and ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimonies of Ubertio Pichi and Bernardino dal Borgo San Sepulchro, 13 January 1566, fols. 131r–135r.

45 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 108, c. 36, fol. 723r.

46 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 108, c. 36, fol. 723r.

47 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 108, c. 36, fol. 723v.

48 Ago, *Economia barocca*, pp. 30–32 and 57–60. On the prevalence of credit throughout early modern Europe, see Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism* (Berkeley, 1992), 2:385–95; and Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998), pp. 95–119 and 123–47.

tanners—not vagabonds and beggars.[49] Papal censuses of prisoners taken at Christmas 1642 and Easter 1679 reveal that most prisoners had taken loans to pay their rents and to buy the tools of their trade.[50] The work of confraternities to loan money to impoverished workers and to free imprisoned debtors alleviated some of the problems but did not stem the tide of poor entering the jails.

Many creditors no doubt never saw their loans repaid. Relationships once bound by trust and even affection soured as creditors resented their lost capital. The vacant see thus opened an opportunity for creditors to retrieve their loans. Romans used the vacant see as justification for their violent self-help. While assaulting his debtor, the basket-weaver Domenico yelled that "he wanted to make justice for himself on account of its being the vacant see."[51] Thus, to make debtors pay, creditors used violence and intimidation. In 1566, the gentleman Ansovino da Camerino and the knight Ventura da Siena clashed over twenty-four *scudi*.[52] Six years later, in Pius IV's vacant see, Francesco Cremonese attempted to retrieve the forty *scudi* that Pellegrino da Mantova owed him from the sale of his inn. Unfortunately for Francesco, Pellegrino proved quicker with blade.[53] And finally, the governor of Rome during Urban VIII's vacant see wrote the Sacred College that a servant of one Vincenzo Paterno, accompanied by several men-at-arms, sought "by means of violence" to make his debtor, a potter, pay a large loan of thirty *scudi*.[54]

Romans even wrangled over smaller sums. For example, Tommaso Serveni complained that, at the beginning of the vacant see of 1559, his creditor Gian Antonio rounded up three companions and demanded several *giulii* that he had loaned Serveni a year earlier. When Serveni protested that he lacked the money, Gian Antonio retorted that he "would extract it from my eyes."[55] Likewise for a tiny sum, on one Saturday in Clement VIII's vacant see of 1605,

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49 Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 1:485–501.

50 Paglia, *La pietà dei carcerati*, pp. 63–64.

51 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 19, testimony of Abram Sacerdote, fol. 1r.

52 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 86, testimonies of Giulio Benignano Romano and Angela Bolognese, 13 January 1566, fols. 154r–156r.

53 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 112, testimony of Francesco Cremonese, 11 May 1572, fol. 33r.

54 ASV, Conclavi, "Urbano VIII," undated letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino to the Sacred College, fol. 656r. Lomellino noted that the servant had first complained to the *caporione* of Sant'Eustachio and the conservators to no avail, which reveals dissatisfaction with "official" justice during the vacant see.

55 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Tommaso Serveni Romano, 9 February 1560, fol. 89v. At other times avengers clashed over items, not money. For example, a servant of the Austrian cardinal, Melchior Klesl, struck Anastasia Stafei several times with the pommel of his sword when she refused to return the jewelry he had loaned her; see

the unidentified creditor of Girolamo da Palombara stopped at his shop three times with a company of seven or eight men, armed with harquebuses and swords. The final time the creditor told Girolamo, "well, it's time that you pay me the eighteen *giulii*." At the beginning of the vacant see of Innocent X, the landlord Filippo Aratore demanded the two *giulii* of late rent from Carlo Bolognese, calling him a "knave" (*furbo*), "thief" (*ladro*), and "filthy drunkard" (*briccone*), all words that detracted from an artisan's honor and financial credibility. Later that evening, Aratore and an accomplice jumped Carlo in the street, beating him with fists and paving stones.[56]

Violence could turn in the opposite direction as well—against lenders who demanded payment of debts before or in the vacant see. The smith Tiberio Siense brought a bandit into Rome to intimidate his creditor Giuliano Florentino and deter him from demanding the restitution of nine *giulii*. Since Giuliano refused to quiet down, in the months leading to the vacant see of 1572 Tiberio threatened him, saying, "You'll be sorry someday." A day before the pope died, Sillo da Pescharina, Tiberio's brother-in-law, began staying at his home. Sillo, a bandit, would walk by Giuliano's house brandishing a harquebus and stare at him. Once Pius had died, Tiberio announced to Giuliano, "Now then the pope is dead." The next morning, as Giuliano worked in his shop across from Tiberio's house, he saw Sillo look at him "with certain wild eyes" while aiming his gun through the window as if to shoot him.[57]

More than fifty years later, Angelo Palmolino d'Amelia demanded the thirty *scudi* from one Luciola "for different jobs done that I did for her and also for

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ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, 28 July 1623, fol. 790r–v. For a fight over articles of clothing, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 40, testimony of Portia Romana, 27 March 1655, fol. 1r–v.

56 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 9, testimony of Carlo Bolognese, 16 January 1655, fol. 1r–v. For other examples of landlords using force against a tenant for late payment during the vacant see, see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 25, testimony of the prostitute Caterina, 17 March 1655, fol. 1r; Processi, b. 196, c. 16, testimony of Beatrice Sorbi d'Avvezzano, 24 February 1655, fol. 1r–v. Also see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimony of Bartolomeo Milanese, 1 January 1566, fols. 108r–109r, in which Bartolomeo claims his former landlord threatened him for back rent once he heard that the pope had died. For the connection between honor and credit in the early modern era, see Scott Taylor, "Credit, Debt and Honor in Castile, 1600–1650," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003), 8–27.

57 For all the quotes, see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 112, testimony of Giuliano da Sesto Florentino, 5 May 1572, fols. 28v–29r. For another example from 1572 in which two millers threatened a grinder with daggers when he demanded the money he had lent them before Pius V's death, see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 112, testimony of the sausage vendor Jacomo di Cremona, 19 May 1572, fol. 43r, and the testimony of the stonecutter Jacomo Milanese, 21 May 1572, fol. 49r.

other things that I gave her." Luciola not only refused to reimburse him, but also had a servant of the Ambassador of Ferrara threaten him. The servant, "swaggering and raising uproar" as Angelo walked by, cried, "Now it's the vacant see" and "put his hand in his cloak as if to pull out a weapon."[58] Similarly, when Consalvo Carini, on the first day of Gregory XV's vacant see, demanded a sword he had lent to the doughnut-maker Tomasso Candidi some time before, he did not expect the latter to return the next day with a wheel-lock *terzarolo*.[59] Using the courts to win back a loan also provoked violence. Damiano Vannuccio attacked Antonio Pellegrini for taking him to court before the vacant see of Gregory XV to retrieve fourteen *scudi* in loans.[60]

Landlords who demanded the payment of late rent suffered, too, at the hands of tenants. The lame courtesan Lavina Ascolana had her lover, a groom of Duke Savelli, and his friend, both from Ascoli, rough up the prior of the Ospedale della Consolatione, Signor Giuseppe Frigoniero, after he demanded earlier in the vacant see that she pay for a room in the hospital that she had promised to take three years earlier. In an argument before the attack, Lavina told the prior, "I want the house when it pleases me, not when it pleases you," threatening the prior at the same time, "I have someone who will teach you to take care [of your tenants]."[61] The inhabitants of Ascoli had a reputation for bellicosity, but the vacant see surely loosened her tongue. Strikingly, she used the impolite tu [*non quando piace a te*] when addressing the prior, a man much further up the social hierarchy.[62]

Vengeance for stolen property featured prominently in assaults. After the death of Pius IV, the weaver Bartolomeo Fiorentino besieged the shop of Battista Venetiano with a troop of fifteen men wearing mail jackets and armed with swords to recover some cloth that he claimed the latter had taken

58 ASR, TCS, b. 67, testimony of Angelo Palmolino d'Amelia, 12 July 1623, fols. 433r–424r.

59 ASR, TCS, b. 67, testimony of Consalvo Carini, 10 July 1623, fol. 1481r–v.

60 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 712, testimony of Antonio Pellegrini, 15 August 1623, fol. 184r–v.

61 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Giuseppe Frigoniero, 20 July 1623, fols. 1211r–1213r, and testimony of Lavina Ascolana, 21 July 1623, fols. 1216r–1220r. For the quote, see the testimony of Lavina's neighbor, Girolamo Romano, fol. 1214r. Lavina had attempted to threaten her female neighbors, Santa Ascolana and the widow Girolama da Macerata, into silence, see fol. 1219r. Lavina most likely had changed her mind about the room, as she had secretly married Venanzo Ascolano, the above-mentioned groom of the Savelli family. The prior of the hospital referred to him as her *bertone*, a secret lover.

62 On the reputation for the fierceness of the Ascolani, see Fosi, *La società violenta*, p. 31. For another case of tenants attacking a landlord, see ASR, TCS, Processi, busta 196, c. 1, testimony of Ascanio Menacarelli 13 February 1655, fol. 1r–v; and testimony of Giuseppe de Rubeis di Celano, 20 February 1655, fol. 2r–v.

from him. Bartolomeo's plan backfired, as Battista killed him in the ensuing swordfight. Acts of revenge even occurred under the roof of the governor of Rome. During the vacant see of 1605, the governor's master of the house, Gioseffe Milano Cremonese, clashed with another familiar, claiming that the latter had stolen his handkerchief. Underlying this attack, as with many brawls of the vacant see, was an old hatred. The other brawler, one Signor Marco Torrone Bresciano, testified that the "master of the house was always hated [by the other familiars]," and that Cremonese "had shamed me a hundred thousand times as is known in this house."[63] This suggests a long-standing grudge, and that—since the theft of handkerchief, an important gentleman's accessory laden with notions of honor—was the final straw for the master of the house.

Stolen items of food, at times a scare resource, also motivated Romans to wreak vengeance upon their neighbors. Marco d'Alatri sought revenge against his neighbor Giulia da Città di Castello because she had pilfered some unripe grapes from his vineyard in the city. Several days after the pope's death, Marco and several accomplices threw stones at her shutters and a few days later assaulted her at dagger point.[64] The innkeeper Francesco similarly had five neighborhood youths harass and attack Prudentia Muscatelli because she stole some fruit stored near her door. The youths first raped her and then a few days later hurled stones at her windows. After the theft, Prudentia told the *caporione* of Colonna that Francesco carried "this hatred of me."[65] The widow Pasquina had her son Paolo throw stones at the gentleman Signor Santi Florio Perugino after he had taken some fruit. Florio, taken aback by the attack, described the youth as "swaggering and threatening me" before making his assault.[66] This, like the attack Lavina made on the prior of the Ospedale della

63 ASR, TCG, Processi (17th cen.), b. 47, c. 27, testimony of Marco Torrone Bresciano, 7 March 1605, fol. 1417v. Torrone added that Milano called him names, such as fucked goat and shameful traitor, "almost continuously," although he himself "never displayed any resentment" toward the master of the house, clearly a sign that both hated each other.

64 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 69, testimony of Stefano Angelo, 29 January 1560, fol. 71r. Theft from neighboring gardens was a widespread phenomenon in early modern rural Italy. Some scholars have argued that Italian peasants saw it as something of right.

65 ASR, TSC, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Prudentia Muscatelli Romana, 2 August 1623, fol. 425r–v. It is unclear whether the youths acted on their own accord in raping Prudentia.

66 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Santi Florio Perugino, 30 July 1623, fols. 427r–428r. The youth, named Paolo, used the "tu" form with Florio, who demanded justice "since he was a man of honor and esteem." Witnesses say that after the two had exchanged words and that after Paolo had brandished a stone, Florio pulled out his dagger; see the testimony of Baldassare Pistolese, 30 July 1623, fol. 428r–v; Giovan Battista Sario

Consolatione, was a vindication that traveled up the social ladder. Avengers in Rome tended to attack members within their own social rank.

These acts of vengeance took on a disciplinary tone and show that during the vacant see what sociologists have called self-help, or private justice, trumped the official justice of the state.[67] Such justice, self-regulating whether by individuals or the community at large, had come under assault by centralizing states throughout early modern Europe, but the process was a gradual one. Rather, the two systems of social control coexisted and often clashed. However, with the lapse in the papal tribunals, particularly that of the governor of Rome, this self-help, or popular form of justice, assumed a larger role.

Susan Dwyer Amussen has argued that a certain level of violence—if controlled and measured—was accepted and even considered legitimate in early modern England.[68] In the vacant see Romans, too, when seeking revenge had come to accept a measured degree of violence. This violence took on a disciplinary tone—spanking, slapping, and scarring—that saw physical pain and humiliation as judicial compensation for the loss of property and face.[69] These attacks, because they were often restrained, shamed the victim even more.

This style of private justice could emulate the official justice of the state. The mason Michelangelo da L'Aquila severed the tongue of an enemy who insulted his father and desired to cut off the hands of the man who had killed his mother.[70] That the vacant see opened an opportunity for such disciplinary revenge can be seen in the words of the prostitute Camilla Sienese before the governor's criminal judge after Paul IV's vacant see. She claimed that her former lover Paolo de Grassi "bothered me on several occasions and, among other things, a bit after the death of Paul IV, which was the vacant see, he beat me several times, hitting me in the face with his mailed gloves." After the election of Pius IV, he continued to menace her. She warned him off, saying, "I warn you, Paolo! Now, it's not the vacant see any longer!" To which Paolo tellingly responded, "By the blood of the Madonna, I'll very well make the vacant

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Neapolitano, 2 August 1623, fols. 428v–429r; and Paolo Baldorno Romano, 29 October 1623, fols. 429v–430r.

67 Donald Black, "Crime as a Social Control," in idem, *Toward a General Theory of Social Control* (Orlando, Fla., 1984), 2:1–27.

68 Susan Dwyer Amussen, "Punishment, Discipline, and Power: The Social Meanings of Violence in Early Modern Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (1995), 1–34. Robert Muchembled makes a similar point for early modern France; see his "Anthropologie de la violence dans la France moderne (XV^e^–XVII^e^ siècles)," *Revue de synthèse* 118 (1987), 34–55.

69 Miller, *Eye for an Eye*, pp. 17–30.

70 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimony of Nicolò da Ferrara, 1 February 1560, fols. 23r–25v; and Investigazioni, vol. 69, testimony of Matthea da Ferrara, 23 January 1560, fol. 52r–v.

see come!"[71] He thus knew that the vacant see was propitious moment to claim the power to execute his own form of justice.

Other avengers favored taking what they believed was owed them. The tanner Carlo Artigiano went to the shop of the smith Battista Vitale, who owed him a mere twenty-two *quatrini*, and "of his own authority cut two feet from his sawhorse and carried them away" as compensation. Not content with taking what he considered his, Artigiano assaulted Vitale later that evening. Vitale emphasized that Artigiano "killed [*sic*] me because I was his debtor."[72] As we have already seen, the basket-weaver Domenico similarly forcibly took items from his debtor—a hat and the two cloaks from the Rabbi Abram. Finally, the prostitute and landlady Madelena had her lover take items from her tenant for back rent.[73]

Another means of vengeance adopted by Romans during the vacant see was to damage the property of those they felt owed them recompense. When Angela Lucatelli, a potter's wife, refused to reimburse the baker's widow Faustina for the bread Faustina had given her, Faustina and her son threw stones at the pottery in Lucatelli's husband's shop, shattering a vase and a majolica bowl, between them worth three *giulii* (far more than the three *baiocchi* she had originally demanded).[74] The unnamed assailant of Leone Cardassi employed a plethora of tactics—threats, assault, theft, and damage to property—in his attack on Cardassi's bakery shop. Cardassi had purchased a barrel of wine on credit and still owed the unnamed Neapolitan wine merchant thirty-three *giulii*. During the vacant see of Gregory XIII in 1585 the wine merchant showed up at Cadassi's shop with a relative and began to threaten the baker. He yelled at Cardassi, "You rogue! You have dared this day to deny me what I have demanded."[75] Then he placed his hands to his face, a threatening gesture, and promised to come back. Later that day he did return, this time with a servant. Again he threatened Cardassi by putting his hands to this throat and shouting, "I wanted to empty this shop and make justice for myself. You're not

71 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 48, c. 19, testimony of Camillo Sienese, 1 May 1560, fol. 141v. See also Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen's translation and analysis of the trial in their *Words and Deeds*, pp. 85–91.

72 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 18, testimony of Battista Vitale, 18 January 1655, fol. 1r–v.

73 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 7, testimony of the prostitute Veronica Angela, 25 February 1655, fol. 1r.

74 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 24, testimony of Angela Lucatelli, 29 March 1655, fol. 1r–v. Hatreds also inspired retaliatory attacks against the property of rivals. For example, the bandit-captain Guercio, "out of enmity," burned two hundred sheep of the Massimi family. See BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 25 January 1592, fol. 53v.

75 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimony of Leone Cardassi, 29 March 1585, fol. 98v.

the master of Rome."[76] Finally, he had his servant cudgel the hapless baker and ransack the shop, throwing bread on the ground and taking many loaves for himself as compensation.

As Mocenigo observed in his report to the Senate, many of the brawls, assaults, and murders stemmed from long-standing hatreds. Historians have recently commented on the plethora of hatreds in pre-modern Europe that often exploded into revenge killings, feuds among clans, and brawls and tumults among individuals. Daniel Smail has even affirmed that hatred tied neighbors and townsfolk together.[77] During the vacant see, hatreds, some open, others simmering, came to the fore to disrupt normal relations between neighbors and associates. Before the *caporioni*, Romans explained that the acts of violence originated in *inimictia* or that they had a particular *odio* ("hatred") or *mal animo* ("ill will") with one or another person. The prostitute Veneranda Napoletana assumed that the five men who had kicked her door and thrown stones at her shutters had been sent by her neighbor "because I have always had a hatred of Vincenza di Francesco da Vitorchiano."[78] The priest Don Clemente Brumani noted that Ludivico Pitiso, "having declared himself my enemy" had made threats prior to Gregory XV's death and continued to stalk and menace him during the subsequent vacant see.[79] And when asked by the *caporione* of Monti why Battista Romano had smashed Caterina Minucci's shutters with a cudgel, a neighbor answered, "I know well that they argue among themselves like cats and dogs."[80]

Enmities between neighbors and associates cancelled all previous legal and community efforts to bring about peace. In the minds of many Romans, all peace agreements, both formal and informal, colloquially called "fare la pace," ceased to function after the pope's death. Formal peace agreements generally received their binding authority in the presence of a notary of one of the city's

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76 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimony of Francesco Bolognese, 29 March 1585, fol. 99r; see also Cardassi's testimony, fols. 98v–99r.

77 Daniel Lord Smail, "Hatred as a Social Institution in Late-Medieval Society," *Speculum* 76 (2001), 90–126. See also idem, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264–1423* (Ithaca, NY, 2003); Robert Bartlett, "Mortal Enmities: The Legal Aspect of Hostility in the Middle Ages," T. Jones Pierce Lecture (Aberystwyth, 1998), pp. 1–18; and David Cohen, *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995).

78 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Veneranda Napoletana, 29 August 1623, fol. 859r.

79 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Dom Clemente Brumani, 12 July 1623, fol. 230r.

80 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 25, testimony of Gian Domenico Smacchia, 4 April 1655, fol. 2v.

many tribunals or sometimes before a priest in a chapel of a church.[81] Informal truces, favored more by the working classes, were performed in taverns and inns, ritually binding the parties by sharing wine, and sometimes bread.[82] But during the vacant see, many Romans felt that all previous peaces, whether formal or informal, lost their binding powers. The innkeeper Ruggiero Delfino Romano had opted to make a formal truce with his enemy, Belardino, three months before Gregory XV's death. Belardino, however, evidently believing that the peace had ceased with the vacant see's onset, shot his wheel-lock *terzarolo* at the innkeeper as he made his way back to his inn in Trastevere.[83] In 1655, the stonecutter Domenico had made peace with his neighbor Giovanni over a boundary dispute, but the latter nevertheless surprised him in an attack with the help of a servant of Monsignor d'Aquino.[84]

Time did not heal lingering hatreds, even if enemies had formally made peace before witnesses and notaries. The vacant see awakened feelings of enmity, prompting acts of revenge that often surprised the victims of assault. Giovanni Filippo Spoletino filed a complaint against Giovanni Vincenzo Soffrenti, also from Spoleto, with the governor' s tribunal in which he claimed that Soffrenti had attacked him during Pius IV's vacant see of 1565 and so "had broken the

81 Mediation between two parties was quite common in early modern Italy and Europe; see Marco Bellabarba, "Pace pubblica e pace private: linguaggi e istituzioni processuali nell'Italia moderna," in *Criminalità e giustizia in Germania e in Italia*, eds. Marco Bellabarba, Gerd Schwerhoff, and Andrea Zorzi (Bologna, 2001), pp. 189–213; Thomas Kuehn, "Law and Arbitration in Renaissance Florence," in idem, *Law, Family and Women: Toward a Legal Anthropology of Renaissance Florence* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 19–75; Richard Kagan, "The Golden Age of Litigation: Castile, 1500–1700," in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge, Eng., 1983), pp. 160–64; James A. Sharpe, "Such Disagreement betwyx Neighbors: Litigation and Human Relations in Early Modern England," in Bossy, *Disputes and Settlements*, pp. 173–78; and Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker, "The State, the Community and Criminal Law in Early Modern Europe," in *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, eds. V.A.C. Gatrell, Breuce Lenman, and Geoffrey Parker (London, 1980), pp. 18–22 and 28–32.

82 The popular practice of settling disputes in taverns over drink was widespread throughout early modern Europe; see Ottavia Niccoli, *Perdonare: Idee, pretiche, rituali in Italia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome, 2007), p. 76; Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830* (London, 1983), pp. 25–27 and 151–53; and Pieter Spierenburg, "Knife Fighting and Popular Codes of Honor in Early Modern Amsterdam," in Spierenburg, ed., *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor and Rituals in Early Modern Europe and America* (Columbus, Ohio, 1998), pp. 114–15.

83 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Ruggiero Delfino Romano, 16 July 1623, fol. 328r–v.

84 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 43, testimony of Domenico di Pietro, 18 March 1655, fol. 1r–v.

peace" between them.[85] Two or three years earlier, Giovanni Filippo had made peace with Soffrenti, ending their enmity, and, in his words, "thought no more of it."[86] Andrea Sarto waited until Urban VII's vacant see, four or five years after making peace with Giovanni Maria Coroni, before assaulting him with a dagger. After a fistfight the two had made the peace before two witnesses and had "embraced each other as a sign of peace." But Sarto harbored a deep-seated ill will toward Coroni, refusing to talk to him and tarnishing his reputation in the neighborhood by calling him a spy and informer.[87] The vacant see evidently presented the perfect time to unleash his anger on Coroni.

The legitimacy of these attacks depended on perspective. The attackers no doubt felt justified because of the new rules of the interregnum, while their victims felt betrayed. The stonecutter Domenico, who remembered the very words that Giovanni had uttered at their informal truce at the Inn of the Fontanella—"if there had been some words between us, it is nothing and now we drank as a sign of peace"—felt betrayed that he "was so maltreated under the peace."[88] The innkeeper Ruggiero uttered similar sentiments before the *caporione* of Regola, emphasizing that Belardino had acted "against the form of the wise canons, laws and constitutions [of Rome] and also against the peace" and that he wanted to make "an example of such a traitor."[89]

Truces made during the vacant see frequently carried little weight. After the neighbors Simona and Francesca exchanged insults from their windows, the two of them, along with their husbands and several neighbors, went to the Inn of the Moro in Trastevere to make peace. As the group left the inn, Simona's husband, seized by a "diabolical spirit," attempted to stab Francesca's husband in the throat.[90] In the same way, the candlemaker Fabio made the peace with Barnabo Merciano after attempting to use force to retrieve a goldfinch the latter had stolen at the onset of Paul IV's vacant see. Although they agreed to

85 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 86, testimony of Giovanni Filippo Spoletino, 11 January 1566, fol. 148v.

86 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 86, testimony of Giovanni Filippo Spoletino, 11 January 1566, fol. 148v.

87 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 224, testimony of Giovanni Maria Coroni, 30 November 1590, fol. 44r–v. For another long case, see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 112, testimony of Donato Pistolese against Francesco Pistolese, 12 June 1572, fol. 102r–v. The two had made peace two years earlier at Christmas, but Francesco assaulted Donato at his garden with a sword and lead pipe at the beginning of the vacant see of 1572.

88 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 43, testimony of Domenico di Pietro, 18 March 1655, fol. 1r–v.

89 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, fol. 328v.

90 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Francesca, wife of Orlando, 28 July 1623, fol. 1267r, see fols. 1267r–1271v for the testimony of neighbors.

"take faith with one another and to not trouble each other for fifteen days," the peace failed to hold in the long vacant see of Paul IV. Later during the vacant see, Barnabo assaulted Fabio as he left an apothecary near the Pantheon.[91]

Failed peacemaking during the vacant see reflects not only existing fissures in the social fabric of early modern Rome, but also the widened the gulf the vacant see created between neighbors, turning hatreds into violent altercations. Moreover, it reveals the failure of community regulation in the face of self-help that flourished in the vacant see. Note the enmity between neighbors Olimpia Massimi and Olimpia Collarava and their respective husbands. The continual bickering between the two women, described as haughty by neighbors, disrupted the small world behind the palace of Marquis Pallavicini for more than a year. Neighbors sought in vain to have them reconcile. The sculptor Martino Fulino da Novara, who had known them for two years, told the conservators' judges that "they no longer talked and several times I tried to put them in peace, but it was never possible."[92] The tensions were finally unleashed with the vacant see, when Olimpia Collarava had her husband and three servants of the marquis hang horns (*corna*) on Olimpia Massimi's door, which threw the neighborhood into further turmoil from the scandal. Thus, not only did the state's justice fail during the vacant see, so did informal networks of community social control.

Much of the tension that sparked enmity and retaliatory violence stemmed from the agonistic relationships between neighbors and associates. The stucco worker Stefano Passerino was killed by Rutilo de Leone, his rival in the Company of San Marcello, while playing pall-mall during the vacant see of 1585. Both confreres "competed for offices" within the prestigious confraternity and "so they came to hate one another."[93] One witness told the governor's tribunal that "Stefano, while he lived, went around armed out of fear of his enmity with Rutilio." Even the efforts of powerful noblemen among the brothers, including members of the ancient Mattei family, to promote peace failed because Stefano and Rutilo "never wanted to do so."

As would be expected, squabbles rooted in jealousy and love featured heavily in acts of revenge of the vacant see. This was especially true of Rome, with

91 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimony of Fabio di Jacomo, 13 February 1560, fols. 123v–125r and 124r.

92 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Martino Fulino da Novara, fol. 482v. Another neighbor voiced a similar assessment of the enmity between the two Olimpias; see the testimony of Jacopo Bolognese, 2 August 1623, fol. 477v.

93 ASR, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimony of Horatio del Bono Romano, 21 March 1585, fols. 72v–73r; for all quotes, fol. 73r.

its much skewed sex ratio of two men for every woman.[94] Men thus competed for the affections of women, and jealously stirred many a heart, prompting Romans to acts of vengeance against rivals. The soldier Teodoro Gerio d'Urbino complained to the governor's tribunal that throughout Paul IV's vacant see in 1559, his rival for the affection of a woman named Nina had pestered him. Evidently, Teodoro claimed that Cosimo, along with his servant named Giovanni, a "fat Florentine," and a servant of Signor Ercole Malatesta, "called upon me several times to fight him during this vacant see."[95] Cosimo later assaulted Teodoro at the *franchigia* of the French ambassador, where the latter had found protection, with a posse of seven men. Only through the assistance of the ambassador's guards did Teodoro escape harm. When asked why Cosimo had attacked him, Teodoro told the governor's judges that "because he [Cosimo] was in love with Nina, but that Nina was in love with me."[96]

More than thirty years later a similar story unfolded. One Heironimo Cancelli, steward of the Signor Justiniano Palavicino, was assaulted by Francesco Torrone, a rival for the affection of the courtesan Olimpia Romana in the Vicolo del Pavone. Torrone gave Cancelli several *piattonate*, blows with the flat of his sword.[97] Cancelli claimed that Torrone wanted to give him a *sfregio*, that is, to scar his face and this dishonor him throughout the neighborhood and the greater city.[98] When asked by the governor's court why Torrone assaulted him, Cancello replied that Torrone "wanted to give it to me [the blows and scars] because the Donna Olimpia Romano is his favorite."[99]

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94 On Rome's unique sex ratio, see Sonnino, "In the Male City," pp. 19–29; and Nussdorfer, "Men at Home in Baroque Rome," pp. 103–30.

95 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Teodoro Gerio d'Urbino, 2 February 1560, fols. 32v–35v and 35r.

96 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Teodoro d'Urbino, 2 February 1560, fol. 34v.

97 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 222, 21 September 1590, testimony of Antonio Bernardino da Arezzo, fol. 73v.

98 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 222, 6 September 1590, testimony of Heironimo Cancelli da Città Ducale, fol. 71r. See also the testimony of the Spanish prostitute Camilla Angela; ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 222, 21 September 1590, fols. 74v–75r.

99 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 222, testimony of Heironimo Cancelli da Città Ducale, 6 September 1590, fol. 71v. For a sampling of other examples of men fighting over women in Rome, see ASR, TCG, Processi (17th cen.), b. 47, c. 11, testimonies of Francesco Soccio da Torino and Enea Scardutio da Cerreto, servants of Filippo Guicciardini, 8 September 1605, fols. 1114v–1115r and 1115v–1116r (involving grooms fighting over a prostitute in Clement VIII's vacant see); ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Benedetto Rocco Ponesino, 20 July 1623, fol. 421r (one Stefano Romano sought to assault his rival for "the friendship of woman" during Gregory XV's vacant see); and ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 16, testimony of Francesca, alias Checca, 22 January 1655, fols. 2v–3r (a rival lover of the

As with many of the retaliatory attacks during the vacant see, those rooted in jealousy and broken relationships often stemmed from long-standing quarrels. For example, the hatmaker Antonio Maria de Tedeschi had fought with his ex-lover, Bernardina Bilanciara, for at least eight months before their conflict in the vacant see of 1585.[100] De Tedeschi had had an amorous relationship with Bernardina for three years with the consent of her husband. But sometime in 1584 de Tedeschi left Bernardina "because he became aware that she had sex with other men," and he had also heard that she was being treated for syphilis.[101] This, of course, resulted in strained relations between the two, as Bernardina was greatly offended by de Tedeschi's actions and demanded compensation for her services. De Tedeschi responded by impugning her reputation in the neighborhood by calling her a whore and placing horns on the door of her house. He also posted scurrilous writings at her door for neighbors and associates to see. For these acts, Bernardina had de Tedeschi arrested twice, once in September 1584 and again around February 1585. After the first arrest, de Tedeschi was released on surety. His release after the second arrest came with Gregory XIII's death on 10 April 1585 and the *caporioni*'s custom and right of freeing prisoners who had committed light crimes. Evidently, the *caporioni* counted de Tedeschi's harassment of Bernardina as a minor crime. Bernardina and her husband, fearing that de Tedeschi might seek revenge, hired several *bravi* with harquebuses to guard their home. Not to be deterred, de Tedeschi started bothering Bernardina again and eventually was arrested a third time by the papal *sbirri*.

The urge for revenge could have a provenance much closer to the vacant see, and could be sparked by misunderstanding. Three months before Gregory XV's death in 1623, the prostitute Lucia saw her lover talking to the married woman Orintia Vannoli. "On account of jealousy of her friend," Orintia told the *caporione* of Sant'Angelo, "she began to insult me and call me many impolite words."[102] One woman of the neighborhood said that because of this episode, "there always had been an enmity between them."[103] Throughout the spring and summer tensions continued to simmer between the two. Then, just eight

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prostitute Checca assaulted one Vincenzo Monacello as he walked to buy wine during Innocent X's vacant see).

100 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Antonio Maria de Tedeschi Romano, 26 and 30 April 1585, fols. 51v–53r and 56r–59v.

101 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Antonio Maria de Tedeschi Romano, 30 April 1585, fol. 57r.

102 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Orintia Vannoli Romana, 28 July 1623, fol. 1389r–v.

103 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Dorotea Porceni da Gubbio, 29 July 1623, fol. 1391r.

days before the pope's death, while the women of the neighborhood washed their clothes around the fountain in Piazza Mattei, Lucia and a tripe vendor's wife exchanged words with Orintia, which escalated into a scuffle between the two women. Finally, with the vacant see's onset, Lucia had several men, including some servants of Cardinal Giovanni Battitsa Deti, throw stones at her shutters and shout insults outside her home.[104]

The vacant see also brought out fissures in marriages. Many marriages in Rome were broken, often with wives leaving husbands, although they were unable to seek divorce due to the strict doctrines of the Catholic Church. Women instead fled to relatives or to the arms of other men. But with the vacant see's arrival, husbands tried to retrieve their wives, whom they claimed that other men "had stolen." In the vacant see in 1572, the soldier Hieronimo Correri da Catanzaro along with his friend and fellow soldier Evangelista Bolognese, sought to retrieve his wife, Susanna, from one Gian Battista Cremonese, who "had stolen her" sometime in the previous year. As Hieronimo put it, "this Gian Battista wanted to make love to my wife," and eventually Cremonese convinced her to run away with him after visiting his house daily to seduce her.[105] Hieronimo fetched his wife, provoking Gian Battista's ire, who kept coming to his house to insult him and even throw stones at him. At the instigation of neighbors, the two officially made peace at the Capitoline before communal notaries. But sometime later Gian Battista, aided by a few sturdy friends, broke the peace by beating up Hieronimo. Not content with this assault, Gian Battista promised more abuse. With the coming of the vacant see he showed up with a posse of men before Hieronimo's door, shouting out to all that could hear him that Hieronimo was a "cuckold."[106] Hieronimo could not suffer this assault to his honor and thus "gave the lie" to Gian Battista, that is, denied the validity of his words and challenged him to a fight.[107] At this invitation, Gian Battista pulled out his sword, causing Hieronimo to flee inside his house to grab a harquebus. Returning from his house, he fired a shot from his harquebus that missed Gian Battista but struck the eye of one his companions. At this

104 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Luigi Arinello Milanese, 5 August 1623, fol. 1392r. This neighbor noticed that at least one of the men wore the livery of the Cardinal Deti and recognized him as the servant of the master of the house of the cardinal's palace.

105 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 191, testimony of Hieronimo Correri da Cataranzo, 7 January 1573, fols. 203v–205v; 203v for quote.

106 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 191, testimony of Hieronimo Correri da Cataranzo, 7 January 1573, fol. 204r.

107 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 191, testimony of Hieronimo Correri da Cataranzo, 7 January 1573, fol. 204r.

moment the *caporione* of Ponte arrived at the scene to break up the altercation and to lead the brawlers to the Capitoline, where he forced them to make the peace.[108]

Similar episodes, especially those related to failed courtships and marriage alliances, dot the folios of the governor's tribunal during the vacant see. The suitor Michele Velaschi had pursued the hand of Giovanna Spagnola so intently, even stealing a kiss from her, that her mother moved the family from Naples to Rome to escape his forceful courtship. Not to be deterred, Michele tracked Giovanna and her family in the vacant see of Gregory XIII, where he stayed unwelcomed and ate at their table until papal *sbirri* arrested him.[109]

At the heart of much of the revenge that occurred during the vacant see was a concern with defending honor. Despite the myriad of fencing and advice books that claimed honor was the prerogative and monopoly of gentlemen and soldiers, all ranks within Roman society felt sensitive to its dictates. As anthropologists of the Mediterranean basin define it, honor was a social commodity that had tangible benefits among one's peers. It had to be continually guarded and defended, as enemies and rivals were always out to steal it or claim it for themselves. It meant different things to different people: for an artisan it was grounded in professional trustworthiness; for nobles, it meant prowess in battles. But for all men honor was grounded in manliness, virility, and the ability to stand up for oneself when challenged. For women, honor resided in their sexuality, and any woman whose sexual virtue was besmirched brought shame to her household. Thus, for all Romans honor was a public commodity subject to the attacks of enemies, assessed by the critical assessment of neighbors, and broadcast by networks of gossip. Those with a reputation

108 For a similar case that took place in the vacant see of 1559, see ASR, TCG, vol. 66, testimony of Blasio d'Arezzo, 22 January 1560, fols. 1v–2r. D'Arezzo assaulted his rival, a steward of Cardinal Cesi, who had "stolen his wife," named Susana.

109 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimonies of the sisters Dinora Messa Neapolitana and Giovanna Messa Neapolitana, 2 May 1565, fols. 155r–156v. Both were probably from Spain originally, as the adjective "spagnola" is used to describe them in the criminal records. For similar cases, see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 86, testimony of Cornelia Suldoni da Urbino, 21 January 1566, fol. 175v (Cornelia served as a witness in a case against Cesare da Prato Santo, who had deflowered a girl and then tried to force her to marry him during the vacant see of 1566); and ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Andrea Pinto Romano, 10 July 1623, fols. 405r–406v (Pinto took Ludovico Carriero to court after Carriero had assaulted Pinto and his niece during the vacant see of 1623 after Pinto had refused to give her hand in marriage to Carriero).

for lacking honor (as well as their families and familiars) could suffer not only social but also material repercussions within the community.[110]

The dictates of honor thus impelled Romans from all social strata to seek revenge during the vacant see, despite the potential punitive repercussions they could face before the law. Romans, even with the freedom that the vacant see ushered in, were caught in what historian Edward Muir has called the "double-binds of manly revenge." Writing on the feuding and vendetta of the Friulian countryside at the beginning of the 16th century, Muir maintained that that many Renaissance nobles had two conflicting choices in seeking vengeance in a blood feud: they could ignore the murder of a relative and suffer a tremendous loss of honor among their peers, or they could avenge the deed, satisfying the cultural dictates of their class but risking exile, life, or loss of property at the hands of the centralizing Venetian state. Muir argued that Friulian nobles, influenced by the so-called civilizing process, learned to sublimate their fiery emotions and adopted less violent means, such as the invective and the judicial courts, to seek vengeance against rivals and foes.[111]

Although Muir concentrated on nobles, evidence from the tribunals of Rome suggests that common men and women faced a similar dilemma in seeking justice against wrongdoers or revenge against enemies. Ruled by the dictates of honor, Romans could take enemies to court and feel emotionally satisfied from the social drama that unfolded publicly for the neighborhood to see and hear. They could also take justice into their own hands, as Peter Blastenbrei has argued in his quantitative study of crime in Rome from 1560

110 For 16th-century books on honor, see Frederick Robertson Bryson, *The Point of Honor in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago, 1935). For classic works on Mediterranean honor, see *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. Jean G. Peristany (Chicago, 1966); and David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 30–55. For honor in Renaissance Italy, see John K. Brackett, "The Language of Violence in the Late Renaissance: The Example of the Tuscan Romagna," in *The Final Argument: The Imprint of Violence in Society in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Donald Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon (Rochester, 1998), pp. 97–105; and Sharon Strocchia, "Gender and the Rites of Honor in Italian Renaissance Cities," in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (London, 1998), pp. 39–60. For a broader temporal and spatial view, see William Ian Miller, *Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), esp. pp. 115–16.

111 Edward Muir, "The Double Binds of Manly Revenge in Renaissance Italy," in *Postures of Dominance and Submission in History*, ed. Richard C, Trexler (Binghamton, NY, 1994), pp. 65–82. On feuding in the Friuli, see idem, *Mad Blood Stirring*. On the civilizing process, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (1939; rev. ed. Oxford, 2000).

to 1585. This is an important point, but one that ignores that artisans, workers, and women frequently had recourse to the courts, as demonstrated by Renata Ago. Romans, however, had a third option: they could wait until the vacant see to assuage the blows to their honor.[112]

Therefore, during the vacant see we see men and women "of the lower sorts," as Venetian ambassadors called those seeking vengeance, defending slights to their honor. Women avenged insinuations against their sexual honor. As we have seen, Madalena Corsetta and her two companions arranged to have Francesco Bonafede stabbed because "he had so insulted them over the honor" nearly a year before the arrival of the vacant see. They had arranged before the governor of Rome an agreement "between ourselves so that we did not speak from around the past October or November," but the memory of the slight did fade away.[113] The prostitute Agnese did not forgive the slight when her neighbor Anna Maria refused to allow a girl she had adopted to hang out with "a public whore." Consequently, during the vacant see, Agnese had her lover Christoforo Spagnolo slap this neighbor and threaten her with his sword.[114] Francesca demanded revenge after her neighbor Simona had accused her of having sex with a Jew. She had her husband confront Simona's husband, as "that was not the way to speak to a married and honored woman."[115]

Men, on the other hand, were duty bound to avenge slights to their honor as well as attacks on their body and their family. Here the double bind becomes forcibly clear. When Cellini's rival at the papal court confronted him on the third day of the vacant see in front of his friends in the busy commercial district of the Banchi, he backed down, to their chagrin. A few hours later, however, after hearing that Pompeo "had boasted of this challenge [*bravata*] he thought he had given me," and upon seeing him exit an apothecary, Cellini immediately unsheathed his knife.[116] Cellini could not ignore the dictates of honor for too long, especially in the tension-filled time of the vacant see. Further down the social scale, the mason Michelangelo da L'Aquila felt a keen need to kill the man who had insulted and attacked his father four years before. Throughout these years, witnesses reported that he talked incessantly

112 Smail, *Consumption of Justice*; Ago, *Economia barocca*, and eadem, "Una giustizia personalizzata: I tribunali civili di Roma nel XVII secolo," *Quaderni storici* 101 (1999), 389–412; and Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität*.

113 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 147, c. 164, testimony of Madalena Corsetta, 31 July 1644, fol. 2v.

114 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 196, testimony of Anna Maria, 22 January 1655, fol. 1r.

115 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Francesca, wife of Orlando di Curtio, 28 July 1623, fol. 1267r.

116 Cellini, *La vita*, p. 185.

of getting revenge. After he had killed his father's assailant, friends warned him that the governor's police had been sent to arrest him. Recognizing his hopeless situation he stated "I wished to kill two or three *sbirri* before they take me."[117]

The Scripted Violence of Revenge

The vacant see can tell us much about Roman attitudes toward violence and justice, as well as inform us about early modern conceptions of violence in general. Anthropologists until recently have categorized violence into two major conflicting binaries: instrumental versus ritual, that is, violence that is performed toward a goal and violence that expresses a message; and impulsive versus rational, that is, violence performed spontaneously and that which is carefully planned in advance. Others have rejected these simple dichotomies, arguing that violence often contains elements of all of the above traits.[118] Pieter Spierenburg agrees with the latter camp, but, inspired by Norbert Elias's magisterial opus, *The Civilizing Process*, maintains that from the early modern period onward, more rational and instrumental forms of violence have prevailed, with impulsive and ritual violence being more a medieval form of violence.[119]

The violence enacted by Romans during the vacant see shows that such binaries often ring hollow. As we have seen, Romans frequently checked their thirst for vengeance, delaying their impulses until the pope's death and hatching plans for revenge could be laid out. Some avengers laid out carefully formalized plans, such as the detailed efforts of the Milanese gentleman Alessandra Posterla during Pius IV's vacant see. Posterla desired vengeance against Ferrante Ruscante, a familiar of Cardinal Francesco Castiglioni, because he had killed his brother several years previously. A vendetta had already existed between the two families, but Posterla waited until the vacant see to act. He hatched a plan in which he would have a professional assassin and several lower-class

117 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 65, testimony of Niccolò da Ferrara, 1 February 1560, fol. 25v. I have rendered these words into the first person. Niccolò is speaking to Michelangelo here, as it was common to have witnesses confront the accused before the judge.

118 For summaries of the argument, see David Riches, "The Phenomenon of Violence," in idem, *The Anthropology of Violence* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 1–27; and Anton Blok, "The Enigma of Senseless Violence," in idem, *Honor and Violence* (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), pp. 27–29.

119 Pieter Spierenburg, "The Faces of Violence," *Journal of Social History* 27 (1994), 701–16, esp. 703–04. Spierenburg implicitly agrees with Elias that violent impulses were increasingly subject to constraints and regulation, but found more rational ways of expressing themselves.

paesani enter Rome to kill Ruscante.[120] Posterla found many of his countrymen jobs as soldiers in the conclave, and others stayed at his palace, even eating at his table. Posterla would have succeeded had not several of his henchmen been arrested for carrying prohibited weapons and, under torture, divulged his plans. Similarly, one messer Adriano met the journeyman Hieronimo Perugino several times before and during the vacant see of Pius IV to discuss plans to "rough up a certain enemy of his."[121] Adriano repeatedly stopped by the tailor's shop where Hieronimo worked and also showed him where his enemy, one Pietro Spagnolo, lived. The particulars of the arrangement were hammered out at an inn where the two shared bread and wine. When Hieronimo lost his nerve, Adriano cajoled him with words and some coins. Hieronimo finally acted during the vacant see, surprising Pietro outside his shop.[122]

Most acts of revenge—especially those committed by the city's artisan and laboring classes—were probably less elaborate but no less planned for. As we have seen, Romans postponed revenge, waiting until the vacant see to spring on their rivals and foes. The preferred method of attack followed a script that allowed them to express ritually and publicly their revenge to the neighborhood. The act of revenge thus had to be public to wash away any shame that had resulted from previous slights. Thus, in the more than hundred years of this study of the vacant see, not one case of poisoning or private murder occurred among the lower ranks of Roman society.[123] Instead, common Romans preferred to assault their enemies in the public eye—in the squares, streets, shops, and even churches of the city. Moreover, they preferred injuries and insults, such as facial scarring and public taunting, which publicized their act of vengeance to a greater audience.

Many acts of revenge committed during the vacant see followed a similar cultural script that Romans unconsciously followed, but to which they did

120 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 110 (16th cen.), c. 12.

121 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimony of Hieronimo Perugino, 2 January 1566, fol. 111v.

122 ASR, TCG, Costutiti, vol. 123, testimony of Hieronimo Perugino, 2 January 1566, fols. 108r and 111v–112v. For another rare example of a hired assassin confessing of his crime committed during the vacant see, see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Vincenzo da Ferrara, 13 February 1560, fols. 108r–111v. The innkeeper Marcello at the Scrofa hired Vincenzo, a journeyman working at a nearby carpenter's shop, to "scar the face" of a woman named Camilla, wife of another carpenter.

123 For the public nature of revenge, see Gregory Hanlon, "Les rituels de l'agression en Aquitaine au XVII^{e} siècle," *Annales E.S.C.* 40 (1985), 244–68; and Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2006).

not slavishly adhere, when insulting and attacking enemies.[124] Typically, the avenger announced his intentions with a shout or battle cry, which served to make the assault public and to insult the honor of the victim. We have seen that this was often a variant of, "Now it's the vacant see," but the shouting of insulting names, such as "traitor" (*traditore*), "fucked cuckold" (*becco fotutto*), "spy," "rogue" (*briccone* or *furfante*), and "thief" (*ladro*), was just as common. Although these were stereotyped names, they often reflected the nature of the revenge act. Accusations of spying often reflected that the victim had denounced the avenger before the papal police authorities, while insults of "thief" and "rogue" often were tied to arguments over business transactions, loans, and the payment of rent. In addition to the physical punishment that was meted out, the name itself served to defame the trustworthiness of the victim. When the victim was a woman, avengers of both sexes used terms tied to her sexuality: "whore" (*puttana* or *bagascia*), "used flower," "diseased vagina" (*carolara*), and "buggered woman" (*bugiarona*). Women typically called their enemies "cowards" (*poltrona*) and a variant on "whore" before launching into an attack. Of course, when the term *becco* or *cornuto* was used against a man, it shamed him because it implied he had no control over his wife or lover's sexual activity. These insults carried a violence of their own that could seriously damage the honor and reputation one enjoyed in the community.[125]

Victims who suffered from insults and attacks used the words *bravare* and *minacciare* to describe the actions of their assailants. The terms mean "to swagger, to boast, to vaunt, to challenge" and "to threaten," respectively, and imply once again that these attacks were made openly. This in itself was the opening salvo of the ritual of revenge and was accompanied by the brandishing of a weapon: holding up a stone in the act of throwing, lowering the barrel of the gun in the direction of the victim, feigning withdrawing a weapon from a

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124 On scripts, see Thomas V. Cohen, "The Lay Liturgy of Affront in Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Journal of Social History* 25 (1992), 857–79; Stephen D. White, "The Politics of Anger in Medieval France," in Rosenwein, *Anger's Past*, pp. 126–52; and Peter Burke, "The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy," in idem, *Historical Anthropology*, pp. 3–14. See also Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York, 1959).

125 On insults in early modern Rome, see Peter Burke, "Insult and Blasphemy in Early Modern Italy," in idem, *Historical Anthropology*, pp. 95–109; Burke's article primarily uses Roman criminal sources. For the economic basis of insults, see David Garrioch, "Verbal Insults in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in *The Social History of Language*, eds. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), pp. 104–19. On the meaning behind insults involving goats, see Anton Blok, "Mediterranean Totemism: Rams and Goats," in idem, *Honor and Violence*, pp. 173–207. Finally, for the violence of insults, see Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft*, pp. 91–93.

cloak, and putting one's hands on one's sword (or displaying it). No doubt other rude gestures were made but were left out by the victims and witnesses more eager to explain the physical aspects of the assaults (the muleteer Angelo's biting his finger is thus a rare glimpse at this type of challenging gesture).[126] As we have seen, this final act of intimidation before the attack had often been preceded by other threatening actions during the vacant see, and in some cases days and months before the death of the pope.

Sometimes the goal of the avenger was an open challenge, an attempt to provoke an opponent to participate in a popular duel.[127] This can be seen in Cellini's account of his brawl with Pompeo in the vacant see of Clement VII. Pompeo attempted to shame Cellini into fighting him with knives. Cases preserved in the conservators' tribunal confirm this function of the taunt. The daughter of Andrea Pinto told authorities that Ludovico Carriero, seeking vengeance for Pinto's refusal to give his niece's hand to him in marriage, "provoked my father into issuing forth" from his chair by calling him a pig and cuckolded goat and unsheathing his dagger when he accosted them at the house of a family friend.[128] The use of insulting names served to incite the ire of the enemy. One Francesco Stregano provoked the tanner Ludovico Vacante by "making a fool of him" and "insulting his honor" by calling him "fucked goat." Vacante immediately wrapped his cloak around his arm and grabbed a stone from the ground to duel with Stregano in a rock fight.[129] Finally, Carlo Bolognese's landlord, wanting his rent, roused him by calling him a knave and a thief. As they fought, Carlo protested, "I am not a rogue, nor a thief!"[130]

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126 On gesture, see de Jorio, *Gesture in Naples*; and Peter Burke, "The Language of Gesture in Early Modern Italy," in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, eds. Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Ithaca, NY, 1992), pp. 71–83. In a few cases we have examples. For instance, Tommaso Canasei initiated a fight with Silvestro Milanese by grabbing his hat; see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 86, testimony of Guglielmo Canattiero, 14 January 1566, fol. 163r. And, as we have seen, an unnamed Neapolitan wine merchant threatened the baker Leone Cardassi by putting his hand to his throat; see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, 29 March 1585, fol. 98v.

127 On the popular duel, see Spierenburg, "Knife Fighting," pp. 105–27; and Bartolomeo Rossetti, *I Bulli di Roma* (Rome, 1979), pp. 221–26. For taunts as a means of provoking opponents into a fight, see Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 92–93.

128 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Orsola Romana, daughter of Andrea Pinto, 10 July 1623, fol. 407r.

129 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 18, testimonies of Ludovico Vacante and Gismondo d'Arpino, respectively, 11 March and 2 April 1655, fols. 1r–2r and 1r.

130 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 4, testimony of Carlo Bolognese, 16 January 1655, fol. 1r.

Romans rarely issued formal challenges, preferring to use intimidation and insult to invite their foes to battle.[131] Avengers allowed their victims to give them the lie (*dare la mentita*), that is, to deny the insult, usually with the phrase "you lie" or "you lie through your throat." In theory this allowed the victim to not only deflect the insult, but to also assert his honor and prepare for the fight.[132] However, this does not mean that avengers wanted a fair fight. After issuing their challenges avengers launched into an aggressive assault on their rivals. Victims barely had time to shield themselves with an arm from the weapons of their assaulters. Indeed, Brantôme, author of *Discours sur les duels*, wrote that during Paul IV's vacant see, many wild fights took place that resembled a duel in name only.[133]

Moreover, Romans found strength in numbers when pursuing vengeance; avengers often attacked with an ally or even a troop of men. Relatives helped avengers out in many cases. Gian Domenico da L'Aquila called on his brother Ascanio, among others, to help retrieve a debt during the vacant see.[134] Tiberio Senese had his exiled brother-in-law threaten his enemy. As we have seen, many avengers relied on friends, neighbors, and associates. But in many cases, avengers hired *bravi* and thugs from the pool of servants and apprentices in the city as well as the influx of men into the city serving as guards. In his report to the Venetian Senate, Mocenigo wrote how locals informed him that "one could find murderers who for ten, eight, six, and even four *scudi* would take the job of killing a man."[135] His informers' words proved true. In the vacant see of 1565, Alessandro Posterla hired a fellow *paesano* named Gian Ambrogio to help him assassinate a rival at the court of Pius IV. Also in vacant see of 1565, one messer Adriano hired a tailor's assistant to rough up an enemy for less than

131 I have found only one reference to a duel taking place in the vacant see. In 1623, the Baron Paravicino challenged a Piemontese noble to a knife fight outside Porta del Popolo. Even so, this did not conform to the formal ritual of the duel that required the issuing of letters of challenge and the presence of seconds; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 26 July 1623, fol. 564v.

132 Girolamo Muzio, *Il duello del Mutio Iustinapolitano con le risposte cavalleresche* (Venice, 1571), pp. 12–13; and Frederick R. Bryson, *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Duel: A Study in Renaissance Social History* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 4–6.

133 Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme, *Discours sur les duels*, in idem, *Oeuvres complêtes* (Paris, 1864), 4:1882. On the general lack of rules in the actual practice of early modern duels, see Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 273–82, esp. 273.

134 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 104 (16th cen.), c. 11, testimony of Bastiano Nardi da Norma, 22 March 1566, fol. 751r–v.

135 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:38.

a *scudo*, and one messer Vittorio had the vineyard worker Silvio da Scapezzano break the arms of his rival for an undisclosed amount.[136]

Women typically had recourse to men in their pursuit of vengeance against enemies and rivals. Married women often had husbands and relatives avenge slights. Prostitutes typically had lovers and clients enact vengeance in their name. Lavina Ascolana had her *bertone*, or secret lover, a groom of Duke Savelli, rough up her landlord.[137] Madalena, a landlady as well as a prostitute, had a "young friend assault Veronica Angela for not paying the rent.[138] Francesca had "her lover" and an apprentice from a nearby shop attack Bartolomeo Torciati for "fare la spia," that is, "being an informant."[139] Others no doubt relied on their feminine charms to get servants and soldiers to attack their enemies. Vittoria Napoletana had a familiar of the Cardinal of Savoy help her lover attack her neighborhood rival, the prostitute Angela Serena da Palermo. One Luciola had a standard-bearer of the Ambassador of Ferrara assault a creditor, who demanded the payment of a loan.[140] These are just a few examples of many found in the reports of the civic patrols. They show that women, especially single women, exhibited a high degree of independence.

Many women even participated in the acts of revenge, either gleefully watching from the sidelines or immersing themselves in the brawl itself. The prostitute Madalena Bonciuto stabbed her rival Belardina Rinaldi in a brawl at the Inn of the Moretto in Trastevere.[141] Francesca, a landlady and prostitute, threw stones at the wife of Giovanni Vennoni da Velletri because she had

136 ASR, TCG, Processi (16th cen.), b. 110, c. 12, testimony of Gian Ambrogio Milanese, 9 March 1566, fol. 697v; and ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 123, testimony of Hieronimo Perugino, 2 January 1566, fol. 112v; and ibid., testimony of Silvio di Scapezzano, 14 December 1565, fols. 82r–83v.

137 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, various testimonies of 20 and 21 July 1623, fols. 1211r–1220r.

138 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 7, testimony of Veronica Angela, 25 February 1655, fol. 1r.

139 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 15, testimony of Bartolomeo Torciati Milanese, 18 January 1655, fol. 1r–v. Another version of this case can be found in ibid., c.1, testimony of Bartolomeo Torciati Milanese, 17 January 1655, fol. 1r–v. Both accounts tell the same story. In the first week of the vacant see, Francesca told Bartolomeo's wife that she "wanted to settle things with him and wanted to have him killed." Three days later, her lover, Carlo Braccheri, and an apprentice named Luca lured Torciati "with nice words" into an alleyway, where they unsheathed their swords. He fled to find sanctuary in the church of San Croce in Gerusalemme as a hail of stones followed him.

140 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Angela Serena Panormitara, 13 July 1623, fol. 1238r; and b. 67, testimony of Angelo Palmolino d'Amelia, 12 July 1623, fols. 423r–424r.

141 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 28, testimony of Belardina Rinaldi Romana, 24 February 1655, fol. 1r.

damaged the water flow of the fountain in her courtyard. She followed a common script, first insulting his wife's honor with a "thousand villainies" before physically assaulting her.[142] Another prostitute, Ortentia Bartolini, dragged her rival Giovanna Malostico by her hair and ears through the streets, while kicking her and insulting her honor.[143]

The assault itself took different forms. Avengers typically sought to dishonor and chastise their victims. The choice of "punishment" for the victim differed according to gender. Against women, both male and female avengers preferred a set of attacks, often used in conjunction with name-calling. These were the relatively mild attacks of hair-pulling, spanking, slapping with an open hand, and scratching (a specialty of women) but also included the *sfregio*, facial scarring, hard blows to the face, and beatings.[144] Without a doubt, Romans favored attacking the face, a potential source of humiliation, in their attacks against enemies during the vacant see. Facial wounds accounted for 46 per cent and 49 per cent of all of the injuries in the extant reports of barbers and doctors, respectively, during the interregna of 1572 and 1644.[145] Mild assaults made on men often took the form of beatings with fists and with the flats of a sword, and attempts to wound with either edged or blunt weapons. The idea was not to kill, but to publicly punish the person, to show that vengeance had occurred and that lost honor had been restored by taking honor away from the victim (who at one time may have been the aggressor). Romans seemed to have been guided by measurable standards of justice when meting out punishments for slights and injuries. This is testified by the fact that, despite the diarists and *avvisi* writers who emphasized the scandalous murders that occurred during the vacant see, very few people actually died. In the three-month vacant see of Innocent X in 1655, only a handful of deaths are mentioned in the more than 2000-page book of the conservators' criminal tribunal. In some cases, the

142 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 7, 11 February 1655, testimony of Fausina Vennoni, fol. 1r–v.

143 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 44, 11 March 1655, testimony of Giovanna Malostico, fol. 1r. In lodging her complaint to the *caporione*'s judge of Regola, Giovanna asserted that she was "a woman with honor," thus showing that concerns for honor existed at all levels of Roman society.

144 A few examples: Francesco Tabanaro began to "insult the honor" of Domenica Silvia as soon as her husband, Francesco Cenci, left Rome to do work on the boats. He grabbed her hair and gave her slaps with his open hand; ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 6, 11 February 1655, testimony of Domenica Silvia Cenci, fol. 1r–v. Mario di Giovan Battista likewise grabbed Diana Appollonio d'Amatrice by the hair as she walked to the Sacred Stair and beat her while calling her a spy and a liar; see ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 12, 18 February 1655, fol. 1r.

145 ASR, TCG, Relazioni dei barbieri et medici, vol. 13, fols. 127r–135v, and vol. 73, n. p.

intent may have been only to save face before one's peers. To repair indignities he had suffered at the hands of Cardinal Cesi's steward before the vacant see, Blasio d'Arezzo threatened him with a dagger. Before papal authorities, Blasio claimed that he wished "only to put some fear into him [the steward]."[146]

This is not to say that Romans never intended to kill their enemies during the vacant see. Throughout Gregory XV's vacant see the diarist Giacinto Gigli wrote that several bodies, many headless, were found at various parts of the city, including the Tiber, showing that blood vengeance did occur.[147] Assassination, however, seems to have been the monopoly of the upper classes, as the few cases where visible exchange of money had occurred involved nobles and gentlemen. During Pius IV's vacant see, Alessandro Posterla arranged for several minions and a professional assassin to kill his enemy Ferrante Rusco. Posterla and his men were arrested by the governor's *sbirri* before they could commit their murder, but the hired killers of Romolo Condopoli, the son of Numa Pompilio, a criminal judge of the senator of Rome, succeeded in shooting him in front of the palace of the Cardinal de' Medici. In contrast, commoners could also make use of thugs, but they preferred to have opponents beaten rather than killed.[148]

The dissemination of the gun in early modern Italy may have inadvertently made it easier for Romans to get kill their enemies since the majority of the murders committed during the vacant see involved guns.[149] Rivals could now be killed from a distance. Nevertheless, the avenging act had to be public; before shooting, Romans shouted battle cries. Moreover, the harquebuses, particularly the wheel-locks, were clumsy affairs that emitted a loud blast and sprayed a rain of sparks and smoke when fired—hardly conducive to secrecy. They raucously announced the act of vengeance. The gun's main purpose may have been to threaten enemies rather than kill; avengers typically brandished the gun or pointed it at their victims but switched to a sword or dagger when attacking. The intent in firing a gun may have been only to scare or wound an opponent rather than to kill. After stones, the gun was the tool of choice

146 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 66, testimony of Blasio d'Arezzo, 22 January 1560, fol. 2r.

147 Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, 1:124–25.

148 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 110 (16th cen.), c. 12, trial of Alessandro Posterla and Ambrogio Posterla, February–May 1566 and ASR, TCG, b. 198 (16th cen.), c. 4, trial of Angelo Bubalo and Curtio Cencio, June–July 1585.

149 Robert C. Davis, "The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke," in *The Renaissance World*, ed. John Jeffries Martin (London, 2007), pp. 398–411; and Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*, p. 85.

employed by youths and men when trying to damage the shutters of former lovers and prostitutes.

In addition to assaulting opponents in the streets, Romans targeted the homes of their rivals in loud affairs that historian Elizabeth Cohen has dubbed "house-scornings." This term, never used by papal or civic officials, who seemed at a loss as to how to categorize it, defines the throwing of rocks, excrement, vials of ink, and other objects at the doors and windows of a victim's home.[150] During the vacant see the number of house-scornings multiplied. Whereas Cohen has found two dozen cases of "house-scorning" in the trials of the governor's tribunal from 1600 to 1608, thirteen and seventeen examples, respectively, of this activity appear in the conservators' tribunals during the vacant sees of 1623 and 1655.[151] Typically, jealous lovers avenged themselves in a storm of stones that broke the shutters of the women, often prostitutes, who had jilted them. As we have seen, the hatmaker Antonio Maria de Tedeschi, jailed in Gregory XIII's pontificate for insulting Bernardina Bilanciara, sought revenge against her upon his release from prison with the pope's death in 1585 by knocking down the shutters of her home.[152] Yet house-scorning could convey all sorts of messages. Prudentia Muscatelli's neighbor had recruited neighborhood youths and servants to throw stones at the window of Prudentia's house for stealing his fruit before the vacant see.[153] Urania and her lover Giuseppe threw stones at the loggia of her neighbor Madalena after relations soured between the two before the vacant see.[154] The ruckus these events created as well as the broken shutters that lay on the ground ensured that the entire neighborhood knew of the event. Similarly, the prostitute Vincenza Bolognese had her lover, a servant of the senator of Rome, and several other men throw stones at the shutters of her rival, the prostitute Cecilia Siciliana. Vincenza, dressed as a man, participated in the house-scorning herself. House-scorning

150 Cohen, "Honor and Gender," pp. 597–625.

151 Cohen, "Honor and Gender," p. 609; and ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67 and b. 196.

152 ASR, TCS, Costituti, vol. 343, testimony of Antonio Maria de Tedeschi, 30 April 1585, fols. 51v–53r. Assailants sometimes fired their harquebuses at the shutters and doors of women's homes; see ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 176, testimony of Caterina Sense against Bartolomeo Sense, 6 May 1585, fols. 195v–196r.

153 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Prudentia Muscatelli Romana, 2 August 1623, fol. 425r–v.

154 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, c. 4, testimony of Madalena, 15 January 1655, fol. 1r. Giuseppe also punched and scratched her in the face, saying, "now that it is the vacant see, I want to avenge myself."

could also be coupled with physical assaults, as Cecilia claimed in her testimony that Vincenza wanted to slash her face (*sfregiare*).[155]

Often, the house became a target for more violent assaults, as bands of armed men, referred to variously as *quadriglia* or *comitava*, led by an avenger attacked a debtor or rival. These assaults followed a script similar to that of those made in the streets: the avenger and his men loudly knocked on the door and issued a challenge. If the occupant did not respond, these bands might throw stones at the shutters before proceeding to either leave or force entry into the home. The weaver Bartolmeo Florentino gathered a troop of fifteen men to assault the fellow weaver Battista Venetiano at his home near the Coliseum. Banging on his door, Bartolomeo sought to provoke Battista into coming out, yelling, "Oh, cuckolded goat! Are you here? Come here! Come out!"[156] Bartolomeo's taunting worked; Battista came out and the two clashed.

Both civic and papal authorities feared large gatherings of men and issued *bandi* regulating the number of people that could travel in a *quadriglia*. "Base men" could not travel in groups larger than four, whereas as "citizens and gentlemen" were limited to eight.[157] Authorities were more lenient toward elites, in spite of their tendency to ignore prohibitions against traveling in large bands. A long-established tradition existed, originating with papacy's return from Avignon, in which previously banished nobles returned to Rome in order to take part in vendettas against rival clans. The most famous of these feuds existed between the Orsini and Colonna families. Throughout much of the High and Late Middle Ages the clans fought internecine battles in the streets of Rome that often flared up during the vacant see, when the city lacked the leadership of a strong ruler.

In the early modern period this tradition continued. The venerable families—the Savelli, the Caetani, and the Conti, as well as the Colonna and Orsini—clashed most noticeably in the vacant sees of Sixtus IV (1484) and Alexander VI (1503). The rumors of Julius II's death in 1511 sparked the renewal of the feud between the Colonna and Orsini after the pope had

155 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Cecilia Siciliana, 10 July 1623, fols. 1190r–1191r.

156 ASR, TCG, Processi, b. 110 (16th cen.), c. 9, testimony of Bartolomeo Pezzari Milanese, 22 January 1566, n. p.

157 For the decrees of the conservators, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 12, edict of 10 July 1623, n. p.; vol. 18, edict of 30 July 1644, n. p.; and vol. 21, edict of 9 January 1655, n. p. For the decrees of the governor of Rome, see ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 29, loose *bando* stuffed in the bundles of letters, 19 October 1591; ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 5 March 1605, p. 212; *bando* of 30 July 1621, p. 213; *bando* of 9 July 1623, p. 214; *bando* of 31 July 1644, p. 215; and *bando* of 9 January 1655, p. 217.

reconciled the two families.[158] However, throughout the 16th century, the great feudal families tended to avoid direct confrontations with each other during the vacant see, despite tensions that existed among them. This did not stop younger, more turbulent members of these clans from committing a variety of misdeeds. Yet there are scant traces of the violence of the nobility in the registers of the conservators' tribunal. Since these old families dominated the *Popolo Romano*, its judicial organs ordinarily did not punish the misdeeds of their members. Moreover, even when the pope lived, the state had a high threshold of tolerance for noble impropriety and violence so that, as the historian Irene Fosi has stated, noble violence in Rome was "far-reaching, omnipresent and inextirpable."[159] Banishing nobles only turned them into outlaws so that by the later 16th century popes had sought to channel their violence by sending them to fight foreign wars against heretics and the Turks. Upon their ascension to the throne, popes sometimes made examples of a few nobles, or rather of some of their minions, who had committed crimes during the previous vacant see. Clement VIII, elected in 1592 after a turbulent period in which three popes reigned in fewer than sixteen months, refused to listen to the calls for clemency from the *Popolo Romano* concerning the death sentence of the nobleman Stefano Muti, arrested in Innocent IX's vacant see for carrying a harquebus. But more often than not favorites of the elites escaped official punishment (and inclusion in the criminal records of the vacant see), as Cellini did for the murder of Pompeo, with the aid of powerful cardinals, ambassadors, and barons. In Cellini's case his patrons were none other than the cardinal-nephew Ippolito de' Medici and the Venetian cardinal Francesco Cornaro.[160]

To find evidence of noble revenge during the vacant see one has to turn to contemporary diaries and newsletters. The nobleman Lelio Della Valle kept a list of crimes and violent acts in his diary that occurred throughout the vacant see of 1585. Among them were acts of revenge committed by noble scions of the Orsini and even Giacomo Boncompagni, the nephew of the deceased pope.[161] Newsletters written in the three vacant sees from August 1590 to January 1592 also noted cases of noble vendetta, although these often took place outside of Rome, in the Campagna and in remoter parts of the Papal States. Roman nobles who returned to Rome directed their anger at the papal government or the memory of the dead pope. Their actions thus represented a protest against

158 Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Costantino Panigada (Rome, 1929), 3:1181–19.

159 Fosi, "Signori e tribunali," pp. 214–30.

160 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 5 February 1592, fols. 80v–81r. For Cellini's protectors, see *La Vita*, pp. 186–88.

161 Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Della Valle," pp. 252–53.

papal policies and perhaps a kind of revenge against a particular pope, but not a revolt against the state.

The feuding of the nobility gradually declined after a high point in the early 1590s. The energetic pope Clement VIII vigorously sought to quell noble violence and created the congregation of the "Buon Governo," a bureaucratic organ that sought to regulate the subject towns of the Papal States more efficiently.[162] Neither Clement nor his successors could completely stamp out the violence of nobles. The diary of Giovanni Battista Spada, beleaguered governor of Rome from 1635 to 1643, is filled with accounts of swordfights and shootings between noble factions, often aligned with the Spanish or French monarchy. Spada's diary demonstrates that Roman Barons were still a contentious and violent group as a whole.[163] Nevertheless, noble violence, particularly the vendetta, rarely appeared in the criminal sources of the 17th century, unless against papal officials, which then was labeled a *crimen laesae maiestatis*. This can be explained by the fact the *Popolo Romano* protected its own. Yet, puzzling is the silence of diaries and newsletters, usually attuned to the salacious and to crimes of passion and honor, concerning noble violence. Thus, during 17th-century vacant sees Roman nobles rarely sought vengeance. Perhaps violence connected to the vacant see had become a prerogative of the laboring classes of Rome by the 1600s. This is confirmed by a dispatch of Venetian ambassador Renier Zen wherein he commented that "after the death of the Pope in the city were murdered some people, but [they were] of low rank and common people."[164]

Revenge, and the emotions behind it, took center stage in the vacant see. Increasingly throughout the early modern era, violent revenge, once considered the only means of righting wrongs by elites, came under fire by humanists as destructive and by moralists as the preserve of God.[165] In this period, the upper and middle classes, as Elias Norbert has argued, moved to less violent means of expressing resentment and avenging slights (such as writing invectives,

162 Fosi, *La società violenta*, pp. 195–221; and Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 99–104. For the *Buon Governo*, see Stefano Tabacchi, *Il Buon Governo: Le finanze locali nello Stato della Chiesa, secoli XVI–XVIII* (Rome, 2007).

163 Spada, *Racconto delle cose*. Urban VIII made Spada a cardinal in 1643, and his successor, Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino, held office at the vacant see of 1644.

164 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 88, dispatch of 15 July 1623, fol. 484r. A letter copied in a newsletter noted that during Leo XI's vacant see "some fights and killings occurred, however among base people, and outside [the city] they continue committing murders," see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, letter of Antonio Gavelli in an *avviso* of 7 May 1605, fol. 239r.

165 Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*, pp. 162–71; and Susan Jacoby, *Wild Justice: The Evolution of Revenge* (New York, 1983).

dueling, and using the courts). In turn, governing elites sought to discipline the violence of the masses and to inculcate restraint in them through law. Scholars have recently questioned this thesis, showing that violent emotions still guided the actions of early modern Europeans of all ranks. The vacant see, however, reveals that, despite efforts by the College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*, violent emotions, including those fueling the lust for vengeance, held sway among early modern Romans.

Rome became an open battlefield during the vacant see in which a flood of violent emotions, embedded in a need for vengeance, burst upon the streets, squares, and other public spaces. Underlying the hate and need for revenge were shame, jealousy, anger, greed, and resentment, which could be alleviated in the catharsis of the vacant see. Yet the violent revenge of the vacant see was not a vicarious experience, as Aristotle's original definition implies.[166] Rather, in seeking revenge during the vacant see, people injured and sometimes killed each other. The violence was real. Thus, the vacant see was a collective catharsis in which hatreds and desires for vengeance were alleviated, replaced by pleasure and joy. This can be seen in rare examples of emotional talk found in the criminal sources. In explaining to the *caporione* of Pigna why the servant Stefano had attacked him twice during the vacant see of Gregory XV, Gian Battista de Alberi stated that his enemy "was not content with the wound he gave me to the head in the past days."[167] Moments after her lover had physically punished her neighbor Anna Maria for insulting her before the vacant see, the prostitute Agnese walked past her victim and "began to laugh and mock her."[168] These statements implied that the avenger felt a purging of hatred with the act of vengeance and a subsequent replacement of that emotion with joy, pleasure, and even glee at his or her enemies' comeuppance. Few, however, could voice their contentment in the pious tones of Michelangelo da L'Aquila. Having killed his enemy, the vineyard worker Battista Lombardo, after a four-year wait, his mother-in-law asked him if he felt had committed a "great sin." Michelangelo responded, "There was no sin. My hands are blessed."[169]

Revenge was a morally and emotionally satisfying prerogative that Romans consciously chose at the time of the vacant see.[170] People who had considered

166 Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London, 1996), p. 10. Heath provides a good explanation of the idea of catharsis in his in introduction, pp. xxv–xliii.

167 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Gian Battista de Alberi, 3 August 1623, fol. 422r.

168 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 196, case 22, testimony of Anna Maria Giulio, 22 January 1655, fol. 1v.

169 ASR, TCG, Investigazioni, vol. 69, testimony of Matthea da Ferrara, 23 January 1560, fol. 52r.

170 On the emotionally satisfying aspect of self-help, see William Ian Miller, "In Defense of Revenge," in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis, 1998), pp. 70–89.

themselves victims or wronged now claimed the moral high ground in enacting revenge. But this anger was not uncontrolled; Romans rationally channeled their anger and need for revenge, biding their time for the vacant see. It calls into question depictions of early modern violence as impulsive and out of control. The vacant see shows that people of all levels could delay their vengeful desires until the death of the pope. Most Romans did not plan elaborate plots of revenge. Instead they waited for the vacant see to express their anger and hatred in the dominant cultural scripts of the day.

The vacant see also shows that many Romans found it emotionally satisfying to seek vengeance through violent self-help. This is not to say that they did not make use of the criminal or civil courts. Rather, during the vacant see, revenge was the order of the day. It was the time par excellence to practice self-help rather than rely on judicial institutions of the state to do this work for them. Even women, whom historians have argued had recourse to the state and its institutions with more regularity than men, sought vengeance through lovers or by their own hands.

Venetian ambassadors and newsletter writers often portrayed the vacant see as a Hobbesian "state of nature" in which war was waged by all against all, but this would be too simple an assessment. It was true that the vacant see revealed the hatreds and divisions among Romans, but the violence and vengeance of the vacant see followed rules that most avengers observed. Justice and discipline were to be meted out at tolerable levels for the most part—the vengeance followed a script and for the most part was not out of control. Assassinations and murders did take place—usually because the avenger felt that only death could assuage his hatred of his enemy (in many cases, one who had killed a family member). A certain degree of violence was thus tolerated by Romans (but not by the state or the victims) and shows that during the vacant see the papal state did not have a monopoly on violence.

The violence of the vacant see allowed Romans to vent their hatreds. But it was no safety valve that sought to bottle violent emotions into one so-called liminal, collective moment. After the election of a new pope, Rome continued to experience murders and brawls, albeit in smaller numbers. What the vacant see did was allow individuals to transform themselves by seeking vengeance. In practicing self-help Romans also laid claim to power and authority; they took justice into their own hands.

CHAPTER 5

Protesting the Papal Prince

In his life of Olimpia Maidalchini, the domineering sister-in-law of Innocent X, the satirist Gregorio Leti devoted a portion of his account to narrate the Pamphili pope's death and the onset of the vacant see. Recounting the moment that news of Innocent's death reached the streets, Leti drily commented that "the city began to rejoice, as it always does in such conjunctures, and no wonder since that which give the people the greatest satisfaction is the liberty that they have during the vacant see."[1] To modern eyes, these are strange words to read concerning the people's reaction to the pope's death. One would expect the people to lament his death with tears and cries of sorrow rather than smiles and shouts of joy. Moreover, one might assume that Leti, an Italian Protestant, might have fabricated the story to mock the papacy and the Catholic faith. Countless newsletters, diaries, and ambassador dispatches, however, confirm that the death of nearly every pope, not just that of Innocent, was greeted with an eruption of joy in the early modern era.

Leti made it explicit that this joy was rooted in the freedom of the vacant see, a freedom connected to the death of popes and the end of their regimes. In the *sede piena*, the time when the pope sat on the throne of St Peter, Romans had to watch their tongues, since the papacy sought to regulate public opinion through strict surveillance and harsh decrees against defamers of the popes, their families, and the Church. The populace frequently murmured against popes, and spirited nobles occasionally provoked minor tumults in the city, but collective action—in the form of protests and riots—was quite rare for Romans in the early modern era. The vacant see changed all this. Like Carnival and other moments of festivity, during the vacant see, Romans subjected popes and their relatives to mocking laughter, scurrilous words, and scathing abuse.[2] Most popes consequently suffered some form of ridicule at their deaths. More seriously, popes whom Romans judged to have failed in providing good government could be harshly judged and their regimes protested with violent words and demonstrations. The vacant see differed from Carnival and other festive

1 Gregorio Leti, *Vita di Donna Olimpia Maldachini, che governò la Chiesa durante il pontificato d'Innocentio X* (Ragusa, 1667), p. 437.

2 On Carnival and festive misrule, see Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. Also see Carroll, "Carnival Rites," pp. 487–502; Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," pp. 98–123; Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans*; and Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*.

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moments in that public censure was mostly directed at the pope and his family rather than a generalized criticism of hierarchy. Moreover, Romans targeted the secular soul of the pope—his princely soul as secular lord of the Papal States—thereby leaving his spiritual soul as Vicar of Christ on earth untouched

Although the vacant see has long been recognized as a recurring moment of license and discord in early modern Rome, scholars have only recently analysed the vacant see as a time of collective protest.[3] This chapter expands on this growing literature by looking at the forms of protest, both in words and deed, during vacant see from 1559 to 1655. It will especially examine the connections between pasquinades and assaults on papal statues as forms of protest that could unite disparate social groups in Rome against popes whose pontificates the people had judged tyrannical. These forms of expression allowed the people to vent and blacken the memory of these popes—actions that were increasingly difficult under the Counter-Reformation papacy. Romans reserved particular censure for popes who failed to adhere to the moral economy of Rome and respect the communal rights of civic magistrates and Roman nobility through pasquinades that slandered his memory and relatives, and ritual assaults against papal statues housed on the Capitoline Hill that served the same purpose.[4]

The Liberty of the Vacant See

The ringing of the Patara bell at the Capitol that announced the pope's death and the commencement of the vacant see was greeted with a wave of cathartic emotion. This outburst reflected weeks, sometimes even months, of eager anticipation that allowed underlying tensions in the city to explode in a collective exhalation. An anonymous conclavist captured this collective sentiment with his report on the election of 1623: "the people caught its breath a bit, hoping with the change in their ruler to change their condition, or fortunes."[5] Nearly every vacant see, except those of short-lived popes, such as Urban VII and Leo XI, saw this wave of emotion, generally described as joy or cheerfulness by newsletter writers and other observers of the Roman scene.

3 For the vacant see as a time of collective protest, see Nussdorfer, "The Vacant See," pp. 173–89; and Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*. For a recent general summary, see Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 61–84.

4 Edward P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76–136.

5 ASV, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 719r.

Very often this joy had more to do with the temporary liberties of the vacant see and the hopes of the people for a new pope whose pontificate would bring opportunities to a new set of courtiers and servants. At other times this joy was tinged with anger over the bad government of the dead pope, who was judged to be too severe in his justice and lacking in his ability to keep the city supplied with an abundance of bread and other staples. The French ambassador Philibert Babou d'Angoulême described the emotional state of the Roman people at Paul IV's death on 18 August in 1559 as "almost furious with joy."[6] This odd juxtaposition of emotions expressed the alleviation that the populace felt at the end of his severe pontificate, marked by war and repressive laws, and the hatred they felt toward him and his family. Three days later, a newsletter reported that the news of the pope's death was greeted "by everyone with boundless joy" equal to the "boundless severity of His Holiness."[7] The cathartic emotions unleashed by the vacant see constituted a form of protest that judged the dead pope.

More than thirty years later, the death of the equally loathed Sixtus V, again vilified for his taxes and stern laws, was met by celebrations in the streets rather than by the customary "signs of sadness."[8] Ordinarily, the people had to express themselves in public as obedient subjects to the living pope, but once their papal father had died they could openly express their anger, rooted in criticisms of his government. This can be seen with Gregory XV's death in 1623. The Ludovisi pope had increased taxes on bread and reserved large quantities of grain for his home city of Bologna during a famine, thereby angering his Roman subjects. After his death, the people vocally measured up Gregory's pontificate with that of Paul V, his predecessor:

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6 Letter of the special ambassador, Philibert Babou, bishop of Angoulême, to Cardinal Guise of Lorraine, 18 August 1559, in Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, 2:827.

7 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 73r. For a similar sentiment, see the entry of the anonymous diarist collected by Pietro Nores in "Storia di guerra degli Spagnuoli contro papa Paolo IV," *Archivio storico italiano* 12 (1847), p. 451. The diarist wrote that news of Paul IV's death "was heard by everyone with greater joy than the sadness of his election."

8 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 1 September 1590, fol. 1r. The anger against a deceased pope could also reflect itself on an individual level. A scribe of the *Popolo Romano* inscribed his loathing of Sixtus V while writing a memorial of Sixtus V's death in a register of decrees. Mid-sentence he changed "mestitia mortuus" to "letitia mortuus"—"sad death" to "happy death." See ASC, Cred. I, vol. 6, fol. 158r.

> One could not express how it appears that the people vented, accordingly making comparisons between the pontificates of Paul V and Gregory XV. They were more vexed with the twenty-nine months of the latter's papacy than they were with the nearly sixteen years of the former.[9]

No matter how many good works the pope performed, he could not counterbalance the ill will the city expressed toward him at the end of his pontificate if he and his family had earned the ire of the populace by failing to adhere to the moral economy.

No better example of this exists than the death of Urban VIII in 1644. Although the Barberini pope was popular in the first half of his long pontificate of twenty-one years, by the second half he had acquired the hatred of the populace due to his increasingly oppressive rule. More importantly, he issued of a series of taxes to finance his family ambitions, which included the ill-conceived effort to take the Duchy of Castro from the Farnese family. The resulting war (1641–44) was a disaster for the Barberini and for the papacy—not only did papal forces fail to take Castro, but much of the money garnered through taxes was squandered on the effort. Once Urban died, an anonymous conclavist wrote that "everyone unanimously rendered thanks to heaven, and gave votive offerings to God." He continued his account, giving a vivid picture of how the news was greeted in the streets. "The people," he reported, "hurled the most horrible curses and wrote infamous satires against Urban such that no pontificate was so unworthily vituperated."[10] These were serious blasphemies that would have attracted the attention of the Roman Inquisition during the *sede piena*.

The longer a pope reigned, the more odious his pontificate became to the people, and consequently his death was met with a greater intensity than those of short-lived popes. After years of bad government, the people were ready to pay the pope back in death. Once Urban VIII died after ruling Rome for more than twenty years, the people took to the streets, shouting "we are free from so

9 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:120–21.

10 BAV, Urb.lat. 1650, "Relatione del Conclave et tratti de Cardinali per la Sede Vacante d'Urbano 8.o nella creatione d'Innocenzo X.o," fol. 5v. The diarist Gigli also noted that the "people were overjoyed by the news of Urban VIII's death"; see Gigli, *Diario*, 1:426. Pasquinades drew inspiration from the people's anger and expressed it as well. One pasquinade compared the joy of the Roman people at Urban's death to the happiness that they felt at the birth of Christ; see Pietro Romano, *Pasquino e la satira . . . Quod non fecerunt barbari* (Rome, 1937), p. 102.

many troubles."[11] Not only were the people free from the odious rule of universally hated popes, such as Urban VIII, they could, with the onset of the vacant see, freely express their opinions of the dead pope's reign. And they could look forward to expressing criticisms of dead popes in more powerful ways that included pasquinades and ritual assaults on their statues.

Ritual Assaults Against Papal Statues

Between 1559 and 1644, no greater form of protest existed during the vacant see than the ritual assaults that Romans staged against the statues of deceased popes housed in the Conservators' Palace on the Capitoline Hill. These assaults forcefully communicated the city's anger and public censure by uniting disparate groups—nobles, civic magistrates, and commoners—in protest against a hated pope's regimes. Through the attacks made against the Capitoline statues, nobles protested the growth of papal authority over their feudal rights, communal officials defended their republican liberties, and the people criticized popes who had burdened them with high taxes and neglected to keep the city supplied with bread. Three popes were judged to have ruled in ways that damaged the interests of these disparate groups, and consequently incurred the collective wrath of all three groups. In death their statues were consequently assaulted. These popes were Paul IV (1559), Sixtus V (1590), and Urban VIII (1644).

It is essential to place the ritual assaults against the statues of popes at the Capitol in the context of ritual pillages. Obviously, since these assaults happened during the vacant see, much of current historical thought connects them exactly to the so-called ritual pillages that often happened at the death of popes and their elections. This line of thought originated with Carlo Ginzburg's seminal essay, "Saccheggi rituali," first published in *Quaderni storici* in 1987, and has been expanded and elaborated upon by Sergio Bertelli and Joëlle Rollo-Koster.[12] Bertelli extended the ritual pillaging to kings, princes, and other monarchs, both at their coronations and at their deaths. Following Ginzburg, he saw the pillages as a means of the people to signal a change in status of the ruler. Meanwhile, Rollo-Koster suggestively argued that the pillages reflected the will and voice of the people. However, she reductively labeled many violent actions as ritual pillages that signaled the occurrence of a vacant see. This

11 Quoted in Romano, *Quod non fecerunt barbari*, p. 107.

12 Carlo Ginzburg, "Ritual Pillages," pp. 20–41. Originally published as "Saccheggi rituali: Permesse a una ricerca in corso," *Quaderni storici* 65 (1982), 615–36. For Bertelli, see his *The King's Body*, pp. 41–43.

allowed her to include the Sack of Rome in 1527 as an example of a ritual sack.[13] Recently, Andreas Rehberg entered into the muddied waters by asserting that the pillages must be placed into their proper historical context and analysed through a "thick description." In particular, he has criticized Rollo-Koster for ignoring the composition of the pillagers taking part in the sacking. Rather than finding a popular element in the study of the pillaging that took place in Rome in 1378 at the election of Urban VI, he found an armed faction led by members of the Colonna family.[14] Within the context of early modern Rome, some of these arguments miss the mark, since Rollo-Koster and Rehberg are both medievalists rather than specialists of the post-1550 city.

My analysis of the assaults of statues follows Laurie Nussdorfer's now classic article on the vacant see of Urban VIII. Nussdorfer saw the assault of Urban VIII's statue as a protest against the dead pope and his Barberini relatives.[15] This chapter expands on her work and sharpens the line between ritual pillage and ritual destruction. First, many of the authors above link pillaging to destruction, and blend ritual pillages that happened at elections of popes with protests that occurred at their deaths. The former, which will be discussed in the next chapter, celebrated the ascension of new pope and often reflected the desires of the people, as Rollo-Koster has pointed out. The latter were a form of protest as well as a form of *damnatio memoriae*, which sought to obliterate the memory of hated memorials to tyrants and hated princes. Before 1559, the crowds focused on the property of the pope, his relatives, and clients. Although the goal was destruction rather than looting, in many cases nobles recovered fiefs and livestock that the popes had confiscated from them. The people also took grain and food that they felt the popes owed them. After 1559, Romans modified the ritual, focusing exclusively on the statue at the Capitol. In essence, the assaults on statues shared many traits with other pre-Industrial riots in that they drew from a repertoire of violent acts and words that could be adapted to different situations.[16] And like many pre-Industrial riots, those taking part in the assaults against the statues had limited goals: the destruction of a pope's memory and the restoration of good government.

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13 Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 168–223; and "Episcopal and Papal Vacancies," pp. 54–70. For her analysis of the Sack of Rome, see "The Politics of the Sede Vacante and the Sack of Rome (1527)," in *Aspects of Violence in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Jonathan D. Davies (Aldershot, 2013), pp. 41–60.

14 Andreas Rehberg, "Sacrum enim opinatur," pp. 201–37. Also see Rehberg and Modigliani, "Saccheggi rituali," pp. 25–36.

15 Nussdorfer, "The Vacant See," pp. 173–89.

16 Beik, *Urban Protest*; Yves-Marie Bercé, *Revolt and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: An Essay in Political Violence* (Manchester, 1987); and George Rudé, *Paris and London in the Eighteenth Century: Studies in Popular Protest* (New York, 1971).

Following Rehberg, I also give a close analysis, when possible, of the composition of the crowds taking part in the assaults. Tracking people is difficult, since the newsletters and diaries rarely give names except for those of noblemen and civic magistrates. The people who rushed the Capitoline Hill to destroy the papal statues are generally referred to as "the plebe." But from an examination of these sources they can be identified as a mixed group of young nobles, civic magistrates, and commoners. Mutual hatred of the dead pope temporarily brought this disparate set together, and the seat of their protest was the Capitoline Hill, sacred to the ancient Romans as a religious site and to medieval and early modern Romans as the locus of their power and liberty. Consequently, Romans gathered there for the vacant see, even before the installation of statues in the 16th century. If the Capitol represented liberty to all Romans, then the statues came to represent not only the tyranny of certain popes but also the increasing encroachment of papal power—an encroachment that began in the 16th century but increased dramatically in 17th century—on the rights of the people. The assaults on the statues, although less dramatic than the riots and tumults of the late Middle Ages, nevertheless allowed Romans to vent, to protest, and, in some cases, to enact change. Over time these riots became less violent as the power of the papacy progressively grew throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, and as Roman nobles and gentlemen concomitantly became less violent as a social group.[17]

However, this was not always the case. Throughout the medieval and early Renaissance period, the *Popolo Romano* actively resisted papal authority and its intrusion into their affairs, and even staged several rebellions against reigning popes. The Capitol generally served as the focal point of this resistance. Cola di Rienzo staged his revolt against the papacy in 1344 from the Capitol, and the memory of this event long inspired the nobles and magistrates of the *Popolo Romano*.[18] When the papacy definitively returned from Avignon with the conclusion of the Council of Constance in 1417, the papacy remained extremely weak, and it took more than a century for the popes to assert their authority over the recalcitrant populace, which had grown used to regulating its own affairs in their absence. Fifteenth-century popes faced outright rebellion from their subjects in these years. Eugenius IV was chased out of Rome

17 Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 77–104; and Alessandro Serio, *Una gloriosa sconfitta: I Colonna tra papato e impero nella prima età moderna* (*1431–1530*) (Rome, 2011).

18 Ronald G. Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome: Cola di Rienzo and the Politics of the New Age* (Berkeley, 2003).

from 1434 to 1443, and had to reside in Florence for much of his pontificate.[19] Soon after, the nobleman Stefano Porcari led the people in a failed coup d'état against Nicholas V in 1453. Each of these rebellions ultimately failed, but they succeeded in galvanizing crowds of mixed classes with different agendas against the growth of papal government.[20] Typically, leaders with humanist educations lashed out from the Conservators' Palace against the "tyrannical rules of priests" in violent speeches that further aroused the ire of the people.

In the course of the 16th century, once the popes established a firmer grip over the city and its inhabitants, these acts of rebellion staged at the Capitol gradually disappeared. The popes ruled Rome, and any expression of discontent or criticism was severely punished. Subsequently, the optimal time for the *Popolo Romano* and the Roman people to vent their rage was during the vacant see, in the wake of the pope's death when his laws ceased to function. The precedent was already set by the 15th century and early 16th century. At the deaths of Sixtus IV (1484), Alexander VI (1503), and Clement VII (1534), and even the rumored death of Julius II (1511), the *Popolo Romano* gathered the people in protest against the dead pope's policies and to assault his memory.[21] The ringing of the Senator's bell—rung only at Carnival and the vacant see—announced to the people that it was time to gather in the Capitoline Square.[22] The conservators in the general council would assert the traditional rights of the *Popolo Romano* and listen to speeches against the recently deceased pope. These actions as well as the brazen words of the noble firebrands emboldened the people, causing massive rioting and attacks against the property and clients of the dead pope. These so-called pillages—more akin to acts of retribution—could be impressive. At the death of Sixtus IV, the Colonna led nobles and commoners in a frenzy of attacks on the palace of Girolamo Riario and the warehouses of the Genoese community in Trastevere.[23] When Clement VII died, the Colonna again guided Romans against the Medici pope's

19 Anthony F. D'Elia, *A Sudden Terror: The Plot to Murder the Pope in Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), pp. 44–53.

20 Massimo Miglio, "'Viva la libertà et populo de Roma': Oratoria e politica: Stefano Porcari," in idem, *Scritture, scrittori e storia* (Rome, 1993), pp. 59–95; and Anna Modigliani, *I Porcari: Storia di una famiglia romana tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Rome, 1994).

21 For Sixtus IV, see Oreste Tommasini, ed., *Diario della città di Roma di Stefano Infessura* (Rome, 1890), pp. 161–62. For Alexander VI, see Dandelet, *Spanish Rome*, pp. 27–28. For Clement VII, see Domenico Orano, ed., "Diario di Marcello Alberini (1521–1536)," *ASRSP* 18 (1895), 384–85. For Julius II, see Clara Gennaro, "LA PAX ROMANA de 1511," *ASRSP* 90 (1967), 17–60.

22 Romano, *Campane di Roma*, pp. 68–70.

23 Tommasini, *Diario della città di Roma*, pp. 161–62.

allies, particularly the grain warehouses of the Strozzi.[24] The people blackened the memory of the pope and decried his "bad government," especially if, like Clement VII, he had failed to provide effective leadership in times of famine and war.

This tradition of using the Capitol as a space for protest during the vacant see continued throughout the 16th century but was significantly altered during the widespread rioting that occurred in the wake of Paul IV's death in 1559. Here we have better documentation of the events surrounding the protests on the Capitoline Hill, specifically, newsletters, ambassadorial dispatches, and diaries. But more importantly, a major change took place during Paul IV's vacant see. The Roman nobility and civic magistrates not only rattled their swords at the Capitol and assaulted his property throughout the city as they always did at the pope's death, but also directed the people's rage against the statue of the pope housed in the Conservators' Palace. In Paul IV's vacant see the first known assault of a papal statue at the Capitoline Hill took place. After 1559 the Capitoline statues dedicated to the pope would be the singular focus of protests against the popes.

Why did Romans come to focus their ire on the statue of the dead pope? First, they were conveniently located on the civic government's turf, in the heart of the communal government's territory, which, as we have seen, had been the receptacle of the republican tradition and focus of rebellion since the 14th century.[25] More importantly, the *Popolo Romano* saw papal statues as something with which they could award a pope for his meritorious deeds, but also take away if his pontificate had become oppressive and odious. In offering a statue to a living pope, civic magistrates sought his patronage and support. Not only was the statue a visible marker of momentary alignment between two parties historically at odds, but it memorialized the people's expectation of the pope. The sacralizing gesture and pontifical robes emphasized the good government and protection the people expected from the pope in his role as Vicar of Christ and paternalistic prince. The first statue that the *Popolo Romano* accorded to a pope was one of marble for Leo X in 1518. They had erected it in thanks for the restoration of several privileges that Julius II had abolished.

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24 Melissa Meriam Bullard, "Grain Supply and Urban Unrest in Renaissance Rome: The Crisis of 1533–34," in *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, ed. P.A. Ramsey (Binghamton, NY, 1982), pp. 280–82.

25 For the Capitoline as a space of civic rebellion, see Nussdorfer, "The Politics of Space," pp. 161–86; and John M. Hunt, "The Pope's Two Souls and the Space of Ritual Protest during Rome's *Sede Vacante*, 1559–1644," in *The Sacralization of Space and Behavior in the Early Modern World*, ed. Jennifer DaSilva (Aldershot, 2015), pp. 177–83.

Paul III likewise received a marble statue, housed in the Senator's Palace, for his generosity toward the people in 1543. Paul IV, too, received a marble statue, just three months before his death in gratitude for his elimination of several burdensome taxes. Ironically, he had requested a marble statue, as he feared that a bronze statue might be melted down for ammunition during a future war, just as Alfonso d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, had done to Michelangelo's statue of Julius II in Bologna in 1511. Gregory XIII also received a marble statue for his goodwill toward the *Popolo Romano* in 1576. Finally, Sixtus V was the last 16th-century pope to receive a statue at the Capitol while still reigning. It was a bronze statue in recognition of his extirpation of banditry in the Roman countryside in 1585.[26]

From the beginning, the protest against Paul IV's memory was a planned affair, with the *Popolo Romano* playing an active role in leading the people against the dead pope and the Carafa. Even before the pope had died, the *Popolo Romano* met in a secret council where on the morning of 18 August 1559 they resolved to open all of the prisons.[27] Here they were exercising a traditional right of freeing all of the prisoners in the city's main jails. But this was markedly different in tone. Rebelliously, they freed the prisoners housed in the jails of the Roman Inquisition, located in the northern region of the city near the port of Ripetta. The *Popolo Romano* sought to punish Paul even as he lay dying, as he was closely associated with the Inquisition and its oppressive justice. Ringing the Senator's bell, they attracted a mixed crowd of more than 2000 noblemen, gentlemen, and commoners to the Capitoline Hill.[28] They led this group to the Inquisition prisons, where they liberated the prisoners, comprising mostly heretics. Demonstrating their piety, they had them swear an oath of loyalty to the Holy Church and the Catholic faith before releasing them from the jails. Then the crowd proceeded to ransack the Inquisition prisons, burning all of the trial records and furniture, consuming the food and wine they found, and eventually setting fire to the building itself. In the fracas,

26 On the papal statues on the Capitol, see Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol*, pp. 171–73; Monika Butzek, *Die kommunalen Repräsentationsstatuen der Päpste des 16. Jahrhunderts in Bologna, Perugia und Rom* (Bad Honnef, 1978); Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 181–84; and Hunt, "The Pope's Two Souls," pp. 181–90.

27 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 261v.

28 On the mixed composition of the crowd, see the letter of the French special ambassador, Babou, to Cardinal Guise, 18 August 1559, in Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, 2:827. Also see the letter of the dean of Oviedo to the General Inquisitor, Fernando de Valdés, 19 August 1559, in José Luis González Novalín, ed., *El inquisidor general Fernando de Valdés (1483–1568): Cartas y documentos* (Oviedo, 1971), 2:256.

several friars were wounded. All of this was done as members of the crowd shouted cries of joy and chants of liberty.[29]

Not content with assuaging its anger with the destruction of the Inquisition palace, the crowd wound its way back to the center of Rome, where it assaulted the Dominican monastery and church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. According to observers, the crowd wanted to burn down the monastery and kill the friars, who stood before the Sacrament, "praying to God to save them from the chaos."[30] Only the arrival of several noblemen, led by the gonfalonier of the *Popolo*, Giuliano Cesarini, saved the friars, who staffed the Inquisition, from being seriously harmed.[31] The crowd only dispersed after Cesarini convinced the friars to depart from Rome by the following morning. Before leaving Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the crowd found a portrait of Paul, which they "tore into minutest pieces."[32] By attacking those associated with the Inquisition, the crowd, which cared little for the plight of the heretics housed in the jails, sought to punish the dead pope for his severity and heavy taxation. Paul IV had promulgated a series of unpopular measures that included levying a series of burdensome taxes on basic foodstuffs to finance his war against the Spanish in Naples, confiscating the fiefs of nobles to give to his nephews, and decreeing harsh laws that regulated the mores of the people. For the next few days, however, angry Romans assaulted the property and clients associated with Paul IV and his Carafa relatives, notably burning down the house of Giovanni Celsi da Nepi, who had collected taxes to finance the pope's war against the Spanish in Naples.[33] Once again, Cesarini acted to control the crowd by preventing them from killing Celsi. But Cesarini was no friend of the Carafa. He made Celsi pay him 30,000 *scudi* to protect his person.[34]

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29 González Novalín, *El inquisidor*, 2:256.

30 BAV, Vat.lat. 12179, "Alcune cose occorse a Roma, nelal Sede Vacante di Paolo Quarto raccolte da un Romano e' notate dilgenetissimamente da Vincezo Bello," fol. 265v.

31 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 266r; González Novalín, *El inquisidor*, p. 256; and the letter of Giovanni Thomaso Vertua to the abbot of Gambara of 18 August 1559 in Rezzaghi, "Cronaca di un conclave," p. 547.

32 González Novalín, *El inquisidor*, 2:256.

33 According to the Venetian ambassador, the crowd wanted to burn down Celsi's home because "he had been behind many of the taxes imposed on this city"; see "Relatione di Luigi [Alvise] Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:37. For a similar sentiment about the causation for assaulting Celsi's residence, see Rezzaghi, "Cronaca di un conclave," p. 549.

34 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avvisi* of 21 and 26 August 1559, fols. 73r and 74r; ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli to Duke Gonzaga, 21 August 1559, fol. 663r; and BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 268v.

As the example of Cesarini demonstrates, the Roman nobility as well as the *Popolo Romano* had a hand in directing the people against Paul IV's property and clients. Newsletters confirm this role of the magnates. A newsletter of 21 August 1559 reported that "the Colonna had prepared to raise hell against the dependents of the pope."[35] Marco Antonio Colonna had sided with Philip II in Paul's war with the Spanish. As a consequence, the pope confiscated Paliano, the Colonna fief, and gave it to his nephew Giovanni, bestowing upon him the title of Duke of Paliano. Upon hearing of the pope's imminent death, Colonna seized his fief and returned to Rome, where the populace accorded him a hero's welcome. Cesarini and Ludovico Savelli, too, had lost fiefs to the Carafa, and, likewise, reclaimed them during the vacant see.[36] For the next three days, Roman nobles raided the Carafa holdings around the city and in the Campagna. Savelli led raids on the Carafa vineyards near Monte Cavallo and outside Porta del Popolo to recover horses and livestock that Paul IV had confiscated from him during the war as a "rebel and enemy of the pope."[37] The reclaiming of fiefs and seizing of property taken by Paul and his relatives had little to do with "ritual sacks" tied to church property. Rather, they were revenge wreaked on the dead pope for his tyranny.

The Roman nobility thus had a hand in the violence directed against the dead pope's property and familiars, but the people participated in the frenzy of assaults on Carafa property with gusto. Newsletters and other firsthand accounts of the violence reveal that commoners took part in the raids against the Carafa vineyards. They especially targeted warehouses in Rome where the Carafa kept hoarded grain.[38] Like the nobles, they were taking back what the pope and his relatives had taken from them.

While the nobility and the people assaulted the property of the pope and his clients throughout Rome, the *Popolo Romano* were moving the protest in a different direction. On 20 August 1559, a day after the pope's death, the civic magistrates issued a decree making it known

> to any person who has before his house, whether a placard, painted on the wall, or in relief, the arms of this tyrannical house of Carafa, enemy of the people, must between today and tomorrow have them torn down, blotted out and broken under the pain of being held infamous and as

35 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 73r.

36 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 26 August 1559, fol. 74r.

37 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 269v. See also the dispatch of Stangheli; ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, f. 889, 21 August 1559, fol. 664r.

38 BAV, Vat.lat. 12179, "Alcune cose occorse a Roma," fols. 268r–269r.

> a traitor of this people. Houses where these arms are found will be at this time sacked and burned, so that in any way possible this much hated name can be annihilated and extinguished.[39]

This recognized what had already transpired at the Inquisition prisons and the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. It also provoked a new spate of violence directed against the memorials of Paul and his family. By all accounts, the populace did not need any threats to incite it to attack the vestiges of the Carafa rule over the city. A newsletter of 21 August 1559 commented on the people's response to the decree, reporting that "everyone carried this out with boundless cheerfulness."[40] The ambassador of Mantua also remarked on the populace's exuberance, writing to his Gonzaga lords that the orders were carried out "with a rejoicing and glee so great by multitude and by practically everyone so that it appears that each might win a reward [for their efforts]."[41] Throughout the city, on the day of the decree, crowds destroyed any memorials to the pope and his family that they could find. The Carafa coat of arms, fixed above the church doors of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and Santa Maria della Pace, was knocked down and smashed. So was the coat of arms of Oliviero Carafa (1430–1511), a respected cardinal and admiral of the papal fleets, and the uncle of the deceased pope, that was in the family tomb found in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. In their frenzy, Romans even attempted to level a convent where the deceased pope had once lived, but the relatives of the nuns housed within persuaded them to the leave the building alone.[42]

The day of the decree the *Popolo Romano* decided to remove the marble statue that it had just dedicated to Paul months before. The Capitoline officials then emulated the judicial punishment meted out to traitors to the commune. In front of a crowd gathered in the Conservators' Palace, they had a stonecutter cut off the statue's nose, ears, and right arm.[43] By cutting off the right arm, the

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39 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 26 August 1559, fol. 74r. For the actual *bando*, entitled "Contro quelli che terranno l'armi di Casa Carafa," see BAV, Capponi 63, fol. 33r.

40 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 73r.

41 ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli to the Duke Gonzaga, 21 August 1559, fol. 663r.

42 BAV, Barb.lat. "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 268r; ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli to Duke Gonzaga, 21 August 1559, fol. 664r; and "Relatione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:37.

43 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 73r; BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 267v; and González Novalín, *El inquisidor*, 2:257. By cutting off the nose and hand of the statue, the officials were blending popular insult and official justice. On the relationship between the two, see Cohen, "The Lay Liturgy of Affront," pp. 857–79; and

officials commented on Paul's power as pope, since papal statues from Paul III onward had adopted the pose of an upraised hand of ancient emperors and since that very arm blessed the faithful who gathered in St Peter's square for official ceremonies of the Church.[44] The officials underlined their criticism of Paul's regime by severing the papal tiara—another potent symbol of papal authority—from the statue and topping the head with the hat of a Jew "in remembrance for that he introduced the wearing of the yellow hat to the Jews of Rome."[45] An executioner then decapitated the statue. As these ritual actions were being performed, the officials read a pronouncement against the simulacrum that stood in place for the dead pope that read, "Tyrant, this is your reward for your deeds!"[46] Once the ritual trial was completed, the executioner threw the severed head out of the window of the Conservators' Palace in sign of "infamy and the greatest hatred."[47] Whatever sacralizing effect the statue might once have had, this ritual stripped it bare. Not only did the charge of tyranny leverage the *Popolo Romano*'s authority over the dead pope, but it also reduced the statue's sacrality by revealing the pope's bad government. Instead of endowing the Conservators' Palace with the pope's aura of holiness, the statue now revealed the people's judgement of his reign.

But the ritual degradation of the statue was not finished. Children then picked up the severed head and dragged it around Rome for several days, during which time they "cursed and mocked it in the way Romans are accustomed to doing in Piazza di Pasquino."[48] The ridicule of children, whose innocence allowed them to criticize those in power, could impart important

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Valentin Groebrer, "Losing Face, Saving Face: Noses and Honor in the Late Medieval Town," *The History Workshop Journal* 40 (1995), 1–15. Bandits in the Roman countryside typically severed the noses and ears of their victims in a form of ritual insult; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avvisi* of 11 November and 8 December 1590, fols. 640r and 641r.

44 Roger Cushing Aiken, "The Capitoline Hill during the Reign of Sixtus V," doctoral dissertation, Berkeley, University of California (1977), pp. 156–60. For the statues of popes as statements of papal authority over communal governments, see Butzek, *Die komunalen Repräsentationsstatuen der Päpste*.

45 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 74r. On the tiara, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *Le Chiavi e la Tiara*, pp. 71–74.

46 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 21 August 1559, fol. 74r.

47 BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 269r.

48 ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of Emilio Stangheli to Duke Gonzaga, 21 August 1559, fol. 663r. For the ritual role of children in critiquing enemies, outsiders, and authority figures, see Richard Trexler, "The Youth Are Coming! Nonsense in Florence during the Republic and Grand Duchy," in idem, *Power and Dependence in Renaissance Florence* (Binghamton, NY, 1993), pp. 112–29.

messages in the early modern era. In this case, the children of Rome protested Paul's severity as they took the statue's head to each of the spaces where secular authorities executed criminals and heretics, namely the Piazza di Ponte and the Campo dei Fiori. Adults also took part in the attack on the head. As it passed through the streets and squares, passersby hurled insults, blows, and filth at it. Again, the actions of the children and adults downplayed Paul IV's sacred side, instead emphasizing his secular role as a prince of the Papal States by highlighting the abuses of power he had committed during his pontificate. After several days of this ritual abuse, the conservator Giovan Battista Salviati paid the children two *giulii* to throw it into the Tiber, ridding the city of the memory of the pope and his pontificate.[49]

The assaults against the images of Paul IV, particularly his statue, worried the College of Cardinals, which held attenuated funeral rites for the dead pope out of fear that "the people might take his corpse and drag it throughout the city."[50] Rather than displaying the body for three days, they had Paul's corpse laid in the Sistine Chapel for three hours. The dead pope was then quickly interred in St Peter's, where a guard of two hundred harquebusiers watched the tomb to prevent any mischief on the part of the populace.[51]

These were not exaggerated worries. The anger directed toward the pope and the Carafa was great. On 21 August 1559, the *Popolo Romano* and the city's barons, including most members of the Colonna, Orsini, and Savelli, gathered in a general council during which they agreed to unite together against the Carafa nephews. At one point, Marco Antonio Colonna gave an impassioned speech that made the barons and magistrates rise to their feet and shout. The barons "swore an oath" to support the *Popolo* "in all things."[52] The barons and the magistrates voted to deprive Giovanni Carafa of his Roman citizenship and to raise an army to seize Carafa at Gallese, the fief Paul had purchased for him. Once the College of Cardinals heard of the events going on in the council, they sharply rebuked the magistrates and barons, reminding them that only the pope could make such important decisions. Nevertheless, the conservators asserted in a letter that their cause was justified because "the cruel house of Carafa" had tyrannized the city with "countless taxes, violations, miseries,

49 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 26 August 1559, fol. 74r; BAV, Barb.lat. 5243, "Diario di Vincenzo Belli," fol. 268r–v; and Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, letter of Angoulême to Cardinal Guise, 15 September 1559, 2:829.

50 BAV, Urb.lat., *avviso* of 26 August 1559, fol. 74v.

51 Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, letter of Angoulême to Cardinal Guise, 15 September 1559, 2:828.

52 BAV, Vat.lat. 12179, "Alcune cose occorse a Roma," fol. 270r.

persecutions, imprisonments, famines, and cruelties."[53] Nothing came of the collective action of the barons and magistrates against the Carafa during the vacant see. Perhaps the collective assault on the images and statue of Paul IV had assuaged their anger until the matter could be discussed with the next pope.

Paul IV's vacant see added a new element to the protests that occurred at the Capitoline Hill. No previous vacant see since Clement VII's of 1534 had witnessed such collective hatred against a pope. Moreover, both the Capitoline officials and the populace at large sought to destroy every memory of the pope. In particular they focused on his statue, treating it like a criminal by submitting it to a ritual trial, punishing it, and eventually casting it into the Tiber River. This followed the common practice in early modern Europe of ritually shaming and discarding the bodies of dead tyrants, heretics, and ethnic enemies.[54] Since it was impossible for Romans to shame the body, they made do with his statue, the best simulacrum available to them. The memory of the defacement and defaming of Paul IV's statue cast a long shadow over the early modern papacy. In the autumn of 1571, Pius V, while discussing the affairs of the Inquisition with the Holy Congregation, recalled the Romans "had dragged the head of statue [through the city]" in addition to burning down the palace of the Holy Office.[55] In 1592, the updated edition of Platina's *Lives of the Popes* discussed the ritual assault of Paul's statue in great detail. The blackening of a dead pope's memory could therefore haunt his reputation for decades.

After Paul IV, the next pope to have his Capitoline statue assaulted was the stern Sixtus V. Once news of Sixtus's death on 29 August 1590 reached the Conservators' Palace, the *Popolo Romano* immediately met in a council where they decided to "remove the head of the statue and have it dragged throughout the city."[56] Shortly thereafter, an armed crowd of nearly 2000 nobles and commoners stormed the Capitol, "demanding the statue of Sixtus in order to drag it about."[57] The Venetian ambassador Alberto Badoer particularly noticed the composition of the crowd, writing in a dispatch that "a multitude

53 BAV, Vat.lat. 12179, "Alcune cose occorse a Roma," fol. 272r–v.

54 On the ritual insults against and the disposing of the corrupting influence of hated enemies and tyrants, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence," in eadem, *Society and Culture*, pp. 152–88; Ranum, "The French Ritual of Tyrannicide," pp. 63–81; and Beik, *Urban Protest*, p. 254.

55 Manuel Serrano y Sanz, ed., *Autobiografias y memorias* (Madrid, 1905), p. 171.

56 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 11, letter of Carlo Muti to the Duke of Savoy, 31 August 1590, n. p.

57 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 442v.

of gentlemen of the *Popolo Romano* went to the Capitol to knock down the statue of His Holiness and to abuse it."[58] Also among the crowd was the nobleman Mario Capizucchi, who wanted to sever the statue's head with his sword. Capizucchi, sources tell us, "incited and stirred up the people," with the help of Fabio Mattei and other Roman nobles.[59] The crowd would have succeeded had the College of Cardinals, wary of possible trouble surrounding the statue, not posted Filippo Colonna with a contingent of soldiers in the Capitoline Square. Once they heard of the ruckus at the Capitol, they dispatched another nobleman, Mario Sforza, with several soldiers to assist in the statue's defense. Colonna and Sforza were able to pacify the crowd only by concealing the statue behind a partition. The following day, emboldened by the crowd's unity against Sixtus's memory, the *Popolo Romano* issued a decree forbidding the erection of statues at the Capitol in honor of reigning popes or their living relatives.[60] Throughout the tumultuous affair, neither the nobility nor the commoners sought to assault any of the other statues, images, or structures associated with Sixtus V or his family: the statue at the Capitoline remained their sole focus.

The vacant see brought to mind the statue at the Capitol, a potent symbol of papal authority that resided in the civic space of the *Popolo Romano*. Even though Clement VIII did not have a statue in the Conservators' Palace, during his vacant see of 1605 the *Popolo Romano* reaffirmed the decree of 1590 in a secret council. An air of defiance accompanied the reissuing of this decree, since many Roman Barons joined the council.[61] Days before, they had requested that the *Popolo Romano* seek the repeal of a bull that Clement had issued that was aversive to their collective feudal rights. The *Popolo Romano* had the *caporioni* and their civic patrols station themselves in the Capitoline Square in a show of force on the day the request was made. In addition to the *caporioni* and their men, more than 3000 people showed up at the Capitol. Despite orders from the conservators to keep the peace, members of the militia kept shooting off their harquebuses in a sign of support of the magistrates.[62]

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58 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 1 September 1590, fol. 1r.

59 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 442v; ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of 1 September 1590, fol. 1r; and ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3301, letter of Giovanni Niccolini of 29 August 1590, fol. 175r.

60 For the decree, see Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol*, p. 173.

61 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 30 March 1605, fol. 153v.

62 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avvisi* of 30 March and 2 April, 1605, fols. 153v–154r and 159r.

The *Popolo Romano*'s defiance may have lost some of its edge by 1635, when they offered a statue to Urban VIII in gratitude for his efforts in preventing the plague of 1629–32 from reaching Rome. The marble statue, sculpted by Bernini, was unveiled in late September 1640 in the Conservators' Palace.[63] By the time of its installment on the Capitol, Urban's credit with the people had begun to plummet due to new taxes he imposed on the city to finance the disastrous War of Castro (1641–44). Fears of potential assaults against the statue marked his prolonged illness in the winter of 1644. When rumors of his illness reached the streets the *Popolo Romano* had the room "where the much hated statue was kept" locked up and fortified to prevent crowds from disturbing it.[64] At his death on 29 July 1644, the public discontent with his pontificate was so great that, in the words of the *caporioni* Gigli, the people "would surely have made some crazy demonstration against his statue had not the conservators taken measures in time."[65] These included locking the doors and windows of the Conservators' Palace, posting a company of soldiers and vassals of Marco Antonio Colonna and several pieces of artillery in the square, and maintaining a company of horsemen in the nearby Roman Forum. Nevertheless, a crowd of Romans led by nobles raced to the Capitoline Hill once the news of Urban's death had traveled through the city.[66]

Once the people realized they could not attack the object of their common hatred, "everyone stood back to look at the statue and there were many who expressed their longing [to get ahold of it]."[67] Undaunted, Monsignor Filippo Cesarini, who had a personal grudge against the Barberini, stood at the steps of the Capitoline, exhorting the people to attack the statue by shouting, "Now the time has come to take revenge against the tyrannical barbarians!"[68] Once he realized the impossibly of damaging the statue, Cesarini, a Jesuit priest, directed the crowd from the Capitol to the Roman College, where he knew a stucco replica of Bernini's statue had been mounted. The crowd, led by the monsignor, threw itself at the replica in such a rage that in less than forty-five minutes "the statue was no more," in Ameyden's laconic description

63 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:331–32. A statue was first offered to Francesco Barberini, but he circumspectly declined it, see Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 182–85.

64 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:412.

65 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:426.

66 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 40, *avviso* of 29 July 1644, fol. 120r. Colonna was an ally of the Barberini at this point. His daughter, Anna, was married to Taddeo Barberini.

67 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:426.

68 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:426.

of the assault.[69] As with Sixtus V, the rioters ignored all other symbols of Urban VIII and his family that dotted the cityscape, despite the fact that Leti could joke that he counted more than 10,000 Barberini bees—the family coat of arms—scattered in Rome and the Papal States, which "served to make men angry rather than to immortalize their name."[70]

The protests against Sixtus V and Urban VIII as well as the preparations that the College of Cardinals made to maintain the peace demonstrate that from 1559 onward Romans had shifted their protest and criticism away from the property of the pope to focus exclusively on their Capitoline statues. These statues came to embody the bad government of the popes. Rather than attack associates and images of the popes scattered throughout the city, the people directed their attention to the Capitoline statues during the vacant see. The social memory of the people—particularly the Roman Barons and *Popolo Romano* who led the assaults—had come to fixate on the statues as symbols of papal tyranny and an assertion of their ancient and collective freedoms.

Urban VIII's vacant see witnessed the last attempt to destroy a papal statue on the Capitol. The *Popolo Romano* raised statues to other popes. The magistrates accorded Innocent X a bronze statue in 1645 as a reward for his legal actions against the Barberini nephews. Despite Innocent's unpopularity with the people—due to his inability to alleviate the burdens of the famine of 1646–48—they never attacked his statue.[71] Popular opposition to papal policy during the vacant see nevertheless continued after Urban VIII's vacant see. But without the united efforts of the nobility and the common folk, these demonstrations were less spectacular. In his *vita* of Donna Olimpia, Leti wrote that after Innocent X's death, many feared that "during the vacant see, the fury of the rude multitude would have offered some insolence to the palace and person of this lady." But to everyone's surprise, "nothing happened." Leti, an inveterate gossiper on papal news who would never pass up a chance to defame the papacy, mentioned no attempt on the statue of the pope at the Capitoline. Instead, he wrote that the common folk thought of making an attack on the pope's hated sister-in-law, but thought better of it out of fear that they would "draw the displeasure of those other great families that she was allied to."[72] This was because the civic nobility and Roman Barons as a group did not have any

69 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma notato da Deone hora temi Dio," fol. 111r.

70 Gregorio Leti, *Il Nipotismo di Roma overo relatione delle raggioni che muovono i Pontefici all'aggrandimento de' Nipoti* (Amsterdam, 1667), p. 125.

71 The *Popolo Romano* offered him in a statue in thanks for his action against the Barberini; see Gigli, *Diario*, 2:450.

72 For all quotes, see Leti, *Vita di Donna Olimpia Maldachini*, pp. 114–15 and 167.

major grievances with the Pamphili pope. Thus, a united front—one that collected both elites and commoners—sparked ritual assaults against the papal statues. The *Popolo Romano* and nobles, however, played a leading role in guiding the people to the Capitoline Hill, where the statues were ensconced.

After Innocent X, the only pope to receive a statue while reigning was Clement XII. The *Popolo Romano* accorded him a bronze statue in 1734, which was only finished ten months before he died.[73] Between Innocent X and Clement XII, therefore, there were no hated symbols of papal tyranny at the Capitol to assault. Equally important, Roman nobles and the *Popolo Romano* had become less volatile over the course of the 17th century.[74] This does not mean opposition to papal policy discontinued during the vacant see after 1644. Romans of all backgrounds still spoke out against popes, most famously in pasquinades.

Pasquino and the Pasquinade Tradition

Pasquinades, poetic satires of various lengths that took the form of invectives, biting dialogues, and street ballads, were one of the best barometers of Rome's anger toward deceased pontiffs. During the vacant see, these libelous verses flourished, allowing both city and court to assess the pope's reign. Like the assaults against the Capitoline statues, pasquinades engaged both elites and commoners. They drew inspiration from popular sentiment in the streets and squares, and in turn directed and shaped the people's ire toward the pope and his policies.

The tradition of writing pasquinades originated among students and professors at the University of Rome and among courtiers of the Curia. Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, the early patron of pasquinade writers, staged poetry competitions on St Mark's Day (April 25).[75] The competitors attached epigrams onto the base of an ancient copy of a statue of Menelaus that rested near the Orsini palace in a small square near the Piazza Navona. The statue, colloquially called Pasquino after a garrulous tailor who lived in the neighborhood, imparted its name on the verses that decorated its base. At first innocuous enough, by the

73 Michele Francheschini and Valerio Venesi, eds., *Statue di Campidoglio: Diario di Alessandro Gregorio Capponi, 1733–46* (Rome, 2005), pp. 45 and 248.

74 Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 77–104.

75 Anne Reynolds, "Cardinal Oliviero Carafa and the Early Cinquecento Feast of Pasquino," *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 34A (1985), 178–208; and the introduction of Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, pp. 7–21.

time of Leo X's pontificate, the pasquinades began to criticize the Curia and the Medici pope's government and reached a crescendo—a veritable "uproar" in the words of historian Domenico Gnoli—during his vacant see and the conclave that elected Adriano VI in 1521.[76] Hence, from its very beginning the pasquinade tradition was closely entwined with the vacant see.

Scholars since the 19th century have claimed that Pasquino spoke with a distinct voice that represented specific social groups. The first historians of pasquinades, influenced by the nationalism of their age, argued that they represented the anticlericalism of the bourgeoisie against the nepotism and corruption of the papacy and the Curia. Others have cast the invectives of Pasquino in a more popular light, dubbing them the "opposition of the piazza."[77] Merging the two schools of thought, Ottavia Niccoli has recently argued that Pasquino represented a popular tradition of anticlericalism of the Roman people, regardless of class status.[78]

These interpretations overlook Rome's unique position as a capital city of both the Papal States and of the Catholic world. Rome was a city of ecclesiastics and officials, often one and the same, and thus its inhabitants by the 16th and 17th centuries had grown accustomed to government by the clergy. Moreover, most Romans accepted the system of nepotism that emerged with the papacy's return to the city with Martin V's election in 1417.[79] They might complain of its excesses, but few seriously questioned its legitimacy. Moreover, pasquinade writers sought jobs and patronage from cardinals and popes, hoping for positions in a palace or the court. Pietro Aretino, one of the first celebrated pasquinade writers, was a client of both Medici popes before he was forced to flee the city due to his cutting invectives.[80] Another author of pasquinades, Nicolò Franco, unsuccessfully sought the patronage of Paul IV and his

76 Domenico Gnoli, *La Roma di Leon X* (Milan, 1938), p. 311.

77 For the older approaches to Pasquino, see Domenico Gnoli, *Le origini di Maestro Pasquino* (Rome, 1890); Vittorio Rossi, ed., *Pasquinate di Pietro Aretino ed anonime per il conclave e l'elezione di Adriano VI* (Turin, 1891); Giovanni Angelo Cesareo, *Pasquino et pasquinate nella Roma di Leone X* (Rome, 1894; repr. 1938).

78 Ottavia Niccoli, *Rinascimento anticlericale: Infamia, propaganda e satira in Italia tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Rome, 2005).

79 On the revival of Rome and the papal court under Martin V and his immediate successor, Eugenius IV, see Elizabeth McCahill, *Reviving the Eternal City: Rome and the Papal Court, 1420–1447* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013), pp. 45–70.

80 On the conservative nature of the pasquinades, see Rossana Arzone, ed., *Pasquinate del Seicento: Le invettive delle "statue parlatni" contro il potere delle nobili famiglie alla conquista di Roma barocca* (Rome, 1995), p. 7.

nephews. Franco later wrote verses against the Carafa pope in revenge during his vacant see in 1559.[81]

Even though most pasquinades can trace their genesis to members of the Curia, they took on a life of their own in the squares and streets of Rome. Pasquinade writers generally attached their invectives with paste from wheat onto Pasquino or one of the city's many *statue parlanti*, or "talking statues."[82] Pasquino, however, remained the main locus of criticism of Rome, especially during the vacant see. Once posted, professional scribes, whose shops were located near Pasquino, quickly copied the pasquinades by hand, selling them to clients and thus dispersing them throughout the city.[83] Newsletter writers spread the pasquinades to a wider audience—in Rome and without—by including them in their newsletters.[84] Pasquinades also spread through the city via oral channels. The literate could read them out loud to a crowd gathered around Pasquino and other talking statues, or to friends sitting in taverns. Once people had heard a pasquinade, they passed it on by word of mouth. The populace at large then could embrace pasquinades as their own, often adding lines to the original writer's work and expressing their opinions through repeating them.

Many pasquinades were transformed into ballads and songs, some of which ironically borrowed the liturgical music of the Church as an inspirational source. Gigli noted that during Innocent X's vacant see of 1655, pasquinade writers wrote songs using the *Salva Regina, Pastor Noster*, and the *Te Deum Laudamus* as inspiration—hymns familiar to Romans used to going to mass on Sundays. Pasquinades using the *Te Deum Laudamus* irreverently played with the hymn the masters of ceremonies had sung at papal coronations

81 Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1560* (Madison, 1969), p. 46; and Mercati, *I costituti di Nicolò Franco (1568–70) dinanzi l'inquisizione di Roma* (Vatican City, 1955), p. 127.

82 Other *statue parlanti* in Rome included Marforio, an ancient statue of Neptune located in the main square of the Capitol; Babuino, a Roman statue of Silenus located in the northern quarter of Campo Marzio; and Abate Luigi, a statue of a Roman patrician located near Sant'Andrea della Valle. Marforio was the most important of these less famous statues, as pasquinade writers often had him converse with Pasquino in dialogues that criticized dead popes and cardinals considered *papabili*.

83 On the scribes who copied the pasquinades, see Brendan Dooley, *The Social History of Skepticism: Experience and Doubt in Early Modern Culture* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 20–23.

84 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, fol. 76r; and Urb.lat. 1040, fol. 162r. These newsletters included several pasquinades but were left undated. They were issued during the vacant sees of Paul IV (1559) and Pius IV (1565).

and processions.[85] These songs could become quite popular with the city. The Dutch newsletter writer Teodoro Ameyden relished that the anti-Barberini ballad "Papa Gabella" was sung by youths in the streets and gentlemen in carriages during Urban VIII's vacant see.[86] This borrowing reveals how effectively pasquinades could infiltrate the streets, squares, and even sacred spaces beyond the piazza where Pasquino rested.

Nearly all popes suffered from the criticism of Pasquino. Since Leo X's vacant see, the pasquinades written at the death of popes brazenly denounced the nepotism and financial corruption of his papacy. Nevertheless, Romans had a great deal of tolerance for nepotism. Pasquinades tended to target family and clients of the deceased popes, thereby conveniently using them as scapegoats for any problems with their pontificates. For example, throughout his reign Paul III suffered countless invectives lambasting his creation of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza for his son, Pier Luigi Farnese, in 1545. Once he died in 1549, pasquinades continued along this line, mocking his conflict with his grandson, Ottavio, who had defied his orders to assume governance over the duchy after Pier Luigi's assassination in 1547.[87]

Most popes, however, retained an aura of sanctity in death in spite of the grand ambitions of their families and their promulgation of often unpopular measures. The people even held the names of some popes in good memory. Although Clement VIII and Paul V aggrandized their houses through building projects that required them to resort to taxes at times, and pasquinade writers lost no time in satirizing these schemes, few pasquinades were written against Clement VIII at his death in 1605. Instead of insulting Clement, pasquinade writers praised him upon the ascension of Paul V, his successor, on 16 May 1605. A newsletter issued less than a week later reported the substance of a pasquinade regarding Paul V's election that read, "all of Rome hopes for a pontificate like that of Clement," which had put an end to the lawlessness, banditry, and famine of the early 1590s.[88] A few days later an encomium was placed on Pasquino stating that the spirit of Clement, which had become lost after his demise, re-entered Paul V. Its anonymous author optimistically concluded, "So it is believed that we will have another pontificate like Clement's."[89] When Paul V died in 1621, he received homage and veneration. At the public

85 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:735.

86 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 131r.

87 For pasquinades issued during the vacant see that center on Paul III and his nephews, see Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, 2:753–54.

88 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 21 May 1605, fol. 271v.

89 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 25 May 1605, fol. 281r–v.

display of his body at St Peter's Basilica, "so many people flocked to kiss his feet that the more aged spoke of never remembering anything similar in other pontificates."[90] Because he maintained an abundant amount of bread for the city during his reign, he was remembered well into the 18th century as "Papa Buono."[91]

Other popes did not fare as well—the avarice and ambition of their families, particularly their cardinal-nephews, left a permanent stain on their reputations and attracted the ire of the people. The sickly Gregory XV left the reins of the government to his calculating cardinal-nephew Ludovico Ludovisi. The cardinal-nephew, knowing he had very little time in his privileged position, sought to enrich his family and himself while his uncle occupied the papacy.[92] Using money from the papal treasury at Castel Sant'Angelo, Ludovisi purchased fiefs and noble titles for his family's lay members, and invested in land, palaces, and the arts. While these were typical schemes of papal families, Ludovisi increased taxes on bread to pay for these expenditures and made matters worse by reserving large quantities of grain for his home city of Bologna during a famine. A conclavist wrote that the people complained of the high price of meat and lack of grain, which Paul V had so abundantly provided as "Father of the Poor," so that they "nurtured a manifest hatred of Cardinal Ludovisi."[93] Pasquinade writers picked up on this strain of popular sentiment in their verses that criticized both the dead pope and his nephew.[94]

The root of the popular grievances against papal families were found in the excesses of nepotism, which resulted in bad government in the form of burdensome taxes, the poor management of the state, and above all, the lack of bread, rather than nepotism itself. The vicissitudes of Gregory XV's reign fully demonstrate how the ambitions of the cardinal-nephew could tarnish a pope's reputation. As Gigli wrote in his diary, the dearth of and high cost of grain were "blamed on Cardinal Ludovisi, who in all the time [of the pontificate] carried

90 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:81. Gigli praised the deceased Borghese pope as "Magnanimous, splendid, an observer of the law, a lover of peace, a protector of the poor, a maintainer and increaser of abundance, the latter which was so dear to his heart that he argued with merchants and bankers when he wanted to increase the size of bread to one pound per loaf"; see Gigli, *Diario*, 1:79.

91 Reinhardt, *Überleben in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*, pp. 46–47 and 107.

92 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:120. On the strategies that papal families followed, see Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy," pp. 329–56.

93 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 718r–v.

94 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 719r.

himself in such a way that no one, generally speaking, bore him any good will, and very quickly acquired the people's hatred to himself and his uncle."[95]

Similarly, Olimpia Maidalchini attracted hatred not only to herself but also to her brother-in-law, Innocent X. Once the pope had died, Gigli wrote that "while the customary obsequies were performed in St Peter's, many verses and other pasquinades were written censuring the deceased Innocent and Donna Olimpia."[96] Many of these pasquinades criticized Maidalchini, Innocent, and the Pamphili family for their ambitious building projects and self-aggrandizement during the famine of 1646–48 that gripped Rome and the Papal States.[97] Instead of feeding the poor and hungry, the Pamphili concentrated their efforts on leaving a testament to their magnificence in Piazza Navona by having Bernini execute the *Fountain of Four Rivers*. Although most of the pasquinades laid most of the bad government of Innocent's pontificate on Maidalchini, the pope did not escape their censure, as one "whom, in order to satisfy the greed of a most avarice and infamous woman, had done many unworthy things."[98]

Pasquinades accentuated the political nature of the pope, his human, princely side, as well as the rampant nepotism and favoritism he showed family and friends. In most cases, popes avoided the direct censure of the people. This was not the case for three popes, whose governmental policies earned them the stinging hatred of the Roman people. These were popes Paul IV (r. 1555–59), Sixtus V (r. 1585–90), and Urban VIII (r. 1623–44). In addition to wanton nepotism, each forged a set of policies that earned him public censure: all three waged costly wars that required substantial impositions on grain, wine, salt, and meat—staple foods of a capital city accustomed to eating better than the countryside and provinces.[99] Paul, one of the founders of the Theatine order and once head of the Roman Inquisition, and Sixtus, a Franciscan friar and a strict ruler in his own right, sought to reform popular mores with heavy-handed bulls and edicts. Urban, although a mild pope at the beginning of his pontificate, ruled for almost twenty-three years and progressively earned the ire of the Roman people through his laws and decrees. These three popes antagonized the ancient Roman nobility, who had enjoyed considerable autonomy and authority over the city and countryside for centuries.

95 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:121.

96 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:733.

97 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:732.

98 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:732.

99 Revel, "A Capital City's Privilege," pp. 37–49; and Reinhardt, *Überleben in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*.

Paul and Urban sought to confiscate the fiefs of prominent families for their own nephews. Sixtus specifically targeted the nobility in his campaign against lawlessness and banditry in the Papal States.[100]

The pasquinades censuring the three popes during the vacant see shared much in common, even adopting the same form, style, and tropes. For example, at the death of Paul IV in 1559, a pasquinade condemned his government with a laundry list of grievances:

> Friar, priest, Theatine,
> imprisonment, exiles, taxes, hatreds, predations,
> slanders, famines, accusations, and tortures,
> weapons, trumpets, drums, wars, and destruction,
> bulls, bandi, reforms, and with these wrongs
> were the divine works of your government.[101]

More than thirty years later, at Sixtus V's death in 1590, a pasquinade similar in tone, style, and imagery circulated throughout Rome:

> Thefts, duties, taxes, hatreds, predations,
> bulls, reforms, bandi, assaults, and tortures,
> imprisonment, exiles, and many unjust deaths,
> though the death of Sixtus V they will end.[102]

The anonymous writers of both pasquinades—separated by several decades—drew inspiration from the same leitmotifs to describe the injustices committed by Paul and Sixtus, respectively. Each pope was a true Counter-Reformation disciplinarian who sought moral reform in Rome and combatted the rebellious nobility. Paul instructed neighborhood priests to monitor the confessions of parishioners and used the Roman Inquisition more vigorously than any other pope before or after him. Sixtus was equally stern. He promulgated rigorous laws to suppress the crimes of the Roman nobility and common people. In the first months of his pontificate alone, newsletter writers recorded that the

100 On Paul IV, see von Pastor, *HOP* (1924), 14:93–169 and 266–87; and Nores, "Storia di guerra," p. 451. On Sixtus V, see von Pastor, *HOP* (1932), 23:72–89; and Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale*, 2:55–54, 806, and 835–36. On Urban VIII, see von Pastor, *HOP* (1938), 29:385–400; and Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 205–27.

101 Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, 2:909.

102 Romano, *Pasquinate et la satira*, p. 39.

decapitated heads of bandits and criminals displayed as a warning in Piazza di Ponte outnumbered the melons in the nearby fruit market at the Banchi.[103]

As with the assaults on the Capitoline statues, Paul IV's vacant see proved to be a crucial turning point in the evolution of the pasquinades, both in their scathing language and vitriolic tone as well as for the sheer number that were written compared with early vacant sees. For the first half of the 16th century, the papacy grudgingly tolerated the pasquinades, but by the time of the pontificate of Julius III, popes sought to curtail their writers' activities. Julius, who as cardinal had enjoyed the pasquinades, hounded their writers and copyists after suffering from their withering pens. Paul IV continued the campaign against pasquinades.[104] The efforts of these two popes caused pasquinades to virtually disappear in the 1550s. However, historian Massimo Firpo has noted that the pasquinades returned in greater numbers and with renewed vigor the day after Paul's death. Firpo has written that the pasquinades directed at the Carafa pope and his familiars were colored by "an extreme violence" and "a deep-seated rancor" not found in previous invectives.[105] The pasquinades focused on his love of the Inquisition and tyrannical rule, mocking him as "an infernal spirit," "a cruel demon," and "a fierce dragon," who "wanted to be feared through the cruel Inquisition and through fire and iron."[106]

Paul IV's vacant see was thus a decisive moment in the pasquinade tradition, as the works became a form of protest rather than just examples of jealous infighting within the Curia. The most vitriolic pasquinades were reserved for the popes who failed to provide "good government" to the city and its people. The pasquinades represented the "moral economy" of the Roman people, as the criteria for tyrannical popes included waging costly and unnecessary wars, implementing heavy taxes, and failure to keep the populace fed during times of famine. A pasquinade recorded in a newsletter during the vacant see of 1590 greeted the news of Sixtus V's death with this line,

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103 On Paul IV and the Inquisition, see Alberto Aubert, "Alle origini della Controriforma: Studi e problemi su Paolo IV," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22 (1986), 303–55. On the decapitated heads of bandits in Piazza di Ponte, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of 18 September 1585, fol. 437v.

104 Renato Silenzi and Fernando Silenzi, *Pasquino: Quattro secoli di satira romana* (Milan, 1932), p. 228.

105 Massimo Firpo, "Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento," *Rivista storica italiana* 96 (1984), 619. On the pasquinades issued during Paul IV's vacant see, see Francisco Gori, "Papa Paolo IV ed i Carafa suoi nepoti: Pasquinate contra la memoria di Paolo IV ed i Caraffeschi," *Archivio storico, artistico, archealogico e letterario delle città e provincial di Roma* 2 (1877), 170–206.

106 Gori, "Papa Paolo IV ed i Carafa," pp. 172, 179, and 180.

inspired by Exodus 32:14: "The Lord repented the evil and is piteous toward his people."[107] The author castigated Sixtus and his severe justice by showing that even the God of the Old Testament regretted the harsh treatment of his followers. In a dispatch to the Savoyard duke, the ambassador Carlo Muti recorded a pasquinade against Sixtus that lamented he "oppressed the people and destroyed Italy" by demolishing homes in Rome with his urban planning schemes and by taxing the people to conserve money in the papal treasury.[108]

Based on the sheer number of pasquinades circulating, Urban VIII was the most vilified pope since Paul IV.[109] The deluge of pasquinades that poured from the pens and echoed through the streets amazed observers of the papal court and city. Ameyden wrote at Urban's death in 1644 that "never has Pasquino prattled so much than for the death of this pope."[110] He commented, perhaps exaggeratingly, that the "multitude of pasquinades of great insults said and written against a pope were never all together so great as those said of Urban."[111] The *caporione* Gigli also noted the efflorescence of poisonous words against the defunct pope, writing,

> Meanwhile, the people vented against the dead Urban and the Barberini with insulting words and with the pen, writing every evil of them. Whence were published numerous compositions, some in Latin, others in the vulgar tongue, some in prose, some in verse, such that I cannot believe I have seen anything like this before.[112]

The populace's censure of Urban VIII centered primarily on his taxes, and the pasquinades here picked up and magnified the spirit of the city. Toward the end of his pontificate, especially to finance the War of Castro against Duke Odoardo Farnese, Urban imposed more than fifty-two taxes on foodstuffs, including an unprecedented tariff on vino romanesco (the local wine of the poor). As he lay moribund in late July 1644, Urban issued a tax on salt, meat, and bread, further antagonizing the city.[113] A popular pasquinade turned into a ballad—"Papa Gabella," attributed to Monsignor Filippo Cesarini—reflected the city's anger

107 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 29 August 1590, fol. 437r.

108 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 11, letter of Carlo Muti to the Duke of Savoy, 31 August 1590, n. p.

109 Romano, *Quod non fecerunt barbari*.

110 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 133r.

111 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 133r.

112 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:429.

113 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:424–25.

with Urban. One line in particular touched upon Urban's attempt to make the taxes more palatable to the people by dispensing indulgences prior to their imposition: "Urban VIII, of the fine beard, imposed a tax after the jubilee."[114] Ameyden wrote that each night during the vacant see, the populace sang songs against the pope, "with a great number of carriages that sang the ballad Papa Gabella, which grows every night." He noted that the "people repeated the refrain as a chant," indicating the marshal tones of the people as they protested Urban's government in the streets and squares.[115] Some of the additions made to Cesarini's pasquinade complained more precisely of Urban's taxes and their pernicious effect on Rome's food supply:

> Forty or more duties
> he has imposed in his life;
> he has marked up
> even veal.
> O Papa Gabella!
>
> In the time of Urban,
> The big loaf of bread,
> light and poorly cooked,
> has now become a roll.
> O Papa Gabella![116]

Other invectives targeted Urban's nepotism, which inspired his efforts to conquer the Duchy of Castro for his nephew Taddeo. This was to be the last great attempt of a pope to seize a dukedom for his family since Paul IV's seizure of Paliano from the Colonna in the mid-1550s. Between these two points, popes had preferred to buy small fiefs from nobles with declining fortunes as a way of bolstering their credentials. In the early years of his long pontificate, Urban had followed this course, purchasing several fiefs from the Colonna and Orsini. When the Farnese duke of Castro refused to pay his debts he owed the papacy, Urban seized the opportunity to take the large duchy for his family. Urban's plan backfired. The pope and his Barberini relatives dragged the Papal

114 Arzone, *Pasquinate del Seicento*, p. 11.

115 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 131r. Tantalizingly, both the *caporioni* and the governor's police frequently arrested young men and women singing ballads and playing guitar "alla spagnola" (or sometimes "alla romana") during the vacant see. Unfortunately, the criminal sources never mention what the youths were singing.

116 Romano, *Quod non fecerunt barbari*, pp. 109–10.

States into an unpopular and ultimately disastrous war. But it was the taxes that Urban levied that most aggravated the people. A pasquinade—similar in vein to those issued against Paul IV and Sixtus V—lamented that "he stirred up cruel war; he filled the world with his wicked fame that invented fifty taxes."[117]

Pasquinade writers, and the Romans who enjoyed their invectives and spread them by word of mouth throughout the city, freely expressed their opinion during the vacant see. This was something close to a right of the people to comment on the high politics of their day—to censure the popes in death and to comment on the election. In this regard, the vacant see opened a new public sphere, similar to the license of carnival and other festive moments of misrule in pre-modern Europe. This was something that Romans felt was theirs. An anonymous report during Urban's vacant see marveled that the "city speaks, writes, and curses without respect and without fear."[118] This tradition of censuring the dead pope puzzled non-Italian visitors to Rome. The Swedish prince—the future Charles XI—was in Rome during Innocent X's vacant see and wondered "if the evil that they say of Innocent were true, then the people should protest while he was living rather than waiting to rip him apart with words in death."[119]

But there was a good reason why Romans waited until the pope's death to protest his policies and censure his name. Not only Urban VIII, but nearly all early modern popes dealt with criticism of their person, families, and regimes with a heavy hand. As we have seen, most popes before the Counter-Reformation acted on an ad hoc basis against pasquinade and newsletter writers. Julius III and especially Paul IV initiated an intense campaign against scandalous and critical writings that temporarily silenced Pasquino until the latter's death in 1559.[120]

A more intense effort against pasquinade writers did not commence until the ascension of the ascetic and stern Pius V, who blamed wanton public speech and writings for disturbing the peace in Rome. Once in power, the former head of the Roman Inquisition arrested several pasquinade and newsletter writers, including Franco. On 19 March 1572, Pius issued the bull *Romani Pontifices*, against pasquinade writers. Three days later he added a constitution

117 Romano, *Quod non fecerunt barbari*, p. 103.

118 Quoted in Romano, *Quod non fecerunt barbari*, p. 99.

119 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:734.

120 Silenzi and Silenzi note Julius III's opposition to pasquinade writing during his pontificate; see *Pasquino*, p. 55. This accounts for the decline in pasquinades in the early 1550s. Firpo also notes the disappearance of pasquinades throughout the 1550s but attributes it solely to the vigorous efforts of Paul IV; see "Pasquinate romane," p. 619.

against newsletter writers.[121] Pius died a few months later, but his successors—Gregory XIII and Sixtus V—enforced his measures by arresting and punishing writers and scribes during their pontificates. Punishments meted out against the authors of pasquinades and other scurrilous writings were harsh and sought to deter others from such enterprises. They included tongue severing, hanging, and decapitation, all performed for the public's edification in Piazza di Ponte and Campo dei Fiori.[122]

Despite the stern measures, papal authorities begrudgingly tended to tolerate pasquinades and their authors as long as they remained underground and did not criticize the living pope, his successors, or other ecclesiastical personages. Pasquinades, moreover, were not transmitted through print. Intense censorship of the printing press ensured that they passed from hand to hand in manuscript or were attached to the many talking statues of Rome (only later being copied by scribes or disseminated by word of mouth to a larger audience). Finally, powerful patrons—nobles, cardinals, and ambassadors—often protected the writers from prosecution.[123] Consequently, papal authorities tended to arrest and make examples of the starving scribes who copied the invectives for private clients. Paradoxically, then, pasquinades could exist if they did not circulate openly and shied away from direct criticism of the Church and its members.

Writers who overstepped these bounds were subject to the full of extent of provisions laid down by Pius V's bull. The extremely thin-skinned Urban VIII had several pasquinade writers arrested, and a few were even executed.[124] Innocent X responded in a similar fashion when anonymous authors posted pasquinades critical of his building schemes during the famine of 1646–48 on the marble blocks used in the construction of the central fountain in Piazza Navona. Innocent, already alarmed by the seditious air in the hungry city and urged by his sister-in-law Olimpia Maidalchini to punish the wrongdoers, acted quickly. He had several authors suspected of being behind the invectives

121 For the bull against pasquinade writers, see Silenzi and Silenzi, *Pasquino*, p. 357. For the constitution against newsletter writers, see Infelise, "Roman *Avvisi*," p. 214.

122 Infelise, "Roman *Avvisi*," pp. 214–15; and Silenzi and Silenzi, *Pasquino*, p. 358.

123 For the underground nature of much of the public writing of Rome, see Dooley, *Social History of Skepticism*, pp. 32–33 and 36–38.

124 Among those whom Urban VIII had executed for either writing or possessing pasquinades are the Monsignor Amodei Venetiano, the Bolognese noble Marchese Francesco Bentiviglio Manzuoli, and the agent of the duke of Modena, Carlo Castelli. See Gigli for Amodei, *Diario*, 1:270–71. See Silenzi and Silenzi for Manzuoli and Castelli, *Pasquino*, pp. 358 and 367.

arrested, including an agent of the duke of Modena, and placed disguised spies in both Piazza Navona and in the nearby Piazza di Pasquino.[125]

Although Romans felt they had the freedom to criticize the dead pope, the governor of Rome regularly issued provisions in his *bandi* that forbade their writing of pasquinades.[126] However, the governor lacked the ability and perhaps did not have the will to stop the dissemination of pasquinades. For example, after the vacant see of the short-lived pope Urban VII (1590), the governor freed several scribes who had been arrested for copying pasquinades. He explained his rationale to the new pope, Gregory XIV, by stating that "this matter has entangled the entire city."[127] Under torture, the scribes had already implicated the brother of the lieutenant auditor of the Apostolic Chamber, and so, fearing a witch-hunt of high-ranking members of the Curia, the governor stopped the trial and released the prisoners.

More than fifty years later, during his uncle's vacant see, Taddeo Barberini demanded that the Sacred College arrest the authors of pasquinades against Urban VIII. When the cardinals forwarded the request to the Governor Giovanni Giacomo Lomellino, he responded that "it would be necessary to punish all of Rome."[128] Lomellino attempted to stop the circulation of pasquinades, but several weeks later he wrote the Sacred College of his inability to prevent the continuing outpouring of criticism issuing from Pasquino that was directed at the dead pope and, by then, increasingly at the cardinals as well. With frustration he reported that "the writings that slander the Holy Memory of Pope Urban and others that concern eminent members of this Sacred College are so numerous that one sees them in everyone's hands."[129] He concluded the letter, telling the cardinals that he had placed guards at Pasquino to prevent writers from posting their invectives on the statue. To mollify the Sacred College further, he offered to arrest some of the principal disseminators of the pasquinades. Thus, papal authorities could only—in the words of Ameyden—"repress the excess license somewhat."[130]

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125 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:534. The duke's agent was one Francesco Mantovani, who also wrote newsletters and was known for passing pasquinades that he found in Rome to the Este.

126 Few of these *bandi* have survived. See BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 15 December 1565, fol. 153r, which mentioned a *bando* issued against harboring bandits, brawling, and the writing of pasquinades. For an extant *bando*, see ASR, Bandi, vol. 21, *bando* of 12 February 1655, n. p.

127 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 26 December 1590, fol. 678r.

128 BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 130r.

129 ASC, Conclavi, "Conclave per la morte di Urbano VIII," letter of Giovanni Girolamo Lomellino to the *capi degli ordini*, 24 August 1644, fol. 547r.

130 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 133r.

Despite the potential for arrest and punishment, the pasquinades of the vacant see were a real opportunity not only for their authors but also for the scribes who copied them. The aforementioned copyists arrested after Gregory XIV's election in December 1590 claimed before the governor's court that they had resorted to selling pasquinades because they had "no other means to earn a living in these times."[131] Wealthy clients typically paid upwards of two hundred *scudi* to have a piece of political satire copied. This was a fortune, considering that most copyists made eleven *baiocchi* a day.[132] During the vacant see there was no shortage of potential buyers, especially ambassadors and visitors to Rome. In his satire lampooning Alexander VII's death, Gregorio Leti wrote that scribes sold "at a dear price an infinity of manuscripts to all the foreigners that come to Rome."[133] At Paul IV's death, the agents of the duke of Mantua assiduously sought to purchase pasquinades written against the dead pope for their Gonzaga lord.[134] Likewise, Savoyard ambassadors procured satirical writings in 1605 and 1655 for their duke despite their desire—in the words of the ambassador Onorato Gino—"to avoid offending his piety."[135] The ambassadors either chose less biting pasquinades or amended them so as not to scandalize their lord. Some clients came from farther afield. The prince of Sweden reputedly "paid many gold coins to take some pasquinades back to his country" during Innocent X's vacant see of 1655.[136]

Interregnal papal authorities faced difficulties in arresting pasquinade writers and scribes. The pasquinade writers wrote anonymously and had powerful protectors. The scribes, although lacking the protection of patrons, were a footloose bunch, occupying the margins of the Roman society and thus falling through the cracks of the Roman justice system. Moreover, there was a general lack of will to prosecute both writers and scribes during the vacant see. Nevertheless, popes often made examples of both groups upon their election.

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131 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 15 December 1590, fol. 648r.

132 For the cost of pasquinades and the daily wages of scribes, see Dooley, *Social History of Skepticism*, pp. 38 and 43.

133 Gregorio Leti, *Il Sindicato di Alessandro VII con il suo viaggio nell'altro mondo* (S. l., 1668), p. 184.

134 ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, letters of Curzio Gonzaga to Duke Gonzaga, 15 and 23 September and 4 October 1590, fols. 595r, 597r, and 604r.

135 See AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 21, letters of Anastasio Germanio to the duke of Savoy, 22 and 25 March 1605, n. p.; and AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 66, letters of the Commandatore Onorato Gino to the duke of Savoy, 18 January, 15 February, and 15 March 1655, n. p. For the quote, see the letter of 15 March. In the letter of 15 February, Gino sent a pasquinade that he revised to make less offensive to the duke.

136 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:733–34.

Both Gregory XIV and Clement VIII had those involved in the pasquinades' dissemination rounded up within days of their ascension. In 1605, newsletter writers hoped that Clement VIII would live up to his pontifical name, but the expected mercy was not forthcoming, as the pope sent several scribes to the papal galleys.[137] Some popes showed less mercy than Clement VIII. Sixtus V had a doctor executed who had written a pasquinade during his predecessor's vacant see.[138]

Time did not dull the impact of words said and written during the vacant see, nor did it blunt the justice popes meted out to those who transgressed laws against blasphemers. Pius V had both Niccolò Franco and Alessandro Pallantieri, his high-ranking patron, tried and executed more than ten years after they had written pasquinades during Paul IV's vacant see.[139] While Pius IV could delight in the invectives against the Carafa pope, Pius V—a loyal partisan of Paul IV—set out to punish them from the start of his pontificate. Although the vacant see opened up the underground world of public opinion, the expression of criticism of the pope could nevertheless catch up with pasquinade writers well after the moment of liberty had passed.

The punishment of the authors of pasquinades after the vacant see demonstrates that the papacy took their words seriously. Although their target—the pope—was dead, pasquinades defamed the sacrality of the pope's person and of the Church as a whole. Popes were supposed to be remembered for the good works that they performed for the Church and the faithful. Whenever papal officials, Capitoline magistrates, and even private individuals wrote about a deceased pope, they prefaced his name with the formula "santa memoria" or "felice memoria." Pasquinades, in contrast, besmirched the honor of the pope and the Church by reminding their readers and listeners of a pope's less-than-holy deeds and by associating his memory with tyranny and even bad government. Many pasquinades borrowed the scatology of the streets, knocking the dead pope from his lofty position and staining his reputation.[140]

The honor of the papacy and the Church was at stake. Papal authorities feared that the pasquinades might fall into the hands of the Protestants.

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137 For Clement VIII's arrest of writers "of poems and pasquinades that spread through the court in this time of the vacant see," see BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 1 February 1592, fol. 69v.

138 Silenzi and Silenzi, *Pasquino*, p. 359.

139 Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World*, p. 46; and Mercati, *I costituti di Nicolò Franco*, p. 5.

140 Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Minneapolis, 2001); and Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991).

Upon hearing how the Swedish prince had expressed "much curiosity" about the pasquinades written against Innocent X, the governor of Rome, Giulio Rospigliosi, jailed those found with satirical manuscripts on their person, and sent four scribes to the galleys and others to the Inquisition's prisons.[141] A month into Innocent X's vacant see, papal printers published an account of the pope's death to "overcome the public rumor" that Donna Olimpia had spent the last days before Innocent's death carting off movables from the Vatican Palace and that the pope had died with his eyes wide open and with a fearful visage. Gigli wrote that the Sacred College had the reports published so that "heretics and enemies of the Apostolic See would not speak ill of or laugh at Catholics."[142] The *caporione* therefore approved of the papacy's counterattack as a means of "not giving material to the heretics." The Savoyard ambassador Gino also wrote to the duke that "one should consider the laughter that [the pasquinades] will induce in heretics."[143]

But the efforts of the Sacred College were in vain. Pasquinades and scurrilous stories about the popes frequently made their way north of the Alps. The libertine Gregorio Leti particularly specialized in writing accounts of the vacant sees and conclaves from 1667 to 1701.[144] Leti had access to newsletters and conclave diaries and copied many pasquinades in his printed works.[145]

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141 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:734.

142 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:736.

143 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 66, letter of Commendatore Onorato Gino to the Duke of Savoy, 18 January 1655, n. p. This was a common fear, as it was voiced in official accounts of the vacant see; see the Italian translation of the Latin report of Germano Alitino, *Relatione dell'ultima malatia e della morte della felice e santa memoria di Papa Innocentio Decimo*, trans. Domenico Moreta Romano (Rome, 1655), 2. Alitino worried that the pasquinades might spread throughout Europe and "give material to heretics and others enemies of the Apostolic See to curse and laugh [at the Church]."

144 Danilo Romei, "Gregorio Leti, sosia e ciurmatore di Pasquino," in *Ex marmore: Pasquini, pasquinisti, pasquinate nell'Europa moderna: Atti del colloquio internazionale, Lecce-Otranto, 17–19 novembre 2005*, eds. Chrysa Damianaki, Paolo Procaccioli, and Angelo Romano (Manziana, 2006), p. 188. Leti frequently gathered and printed pasquinades in his scurrilous histories of the vacant see and conclave. For example, he printed many of the pasquinades written during Clement IX's vacant see (1669–70) in *L'ambasciata di Romolo à Roma, nelle quale vi sono annessi tutti tratti, negotiate, satire, pasquinate, relationi, apologie, canzone, sonetti, ritratti, & altre scritture sopra interessi di Roma durante sede vacante* (1671; repr. Cologne, 1676). He included eighty-nine pasquinades in this tome, which gives an idea of the number of pasquinades a vacant see could produce.

145 Leti could mock the concerns of the pious that the pasquinades might end up in the wrong hands and give laughter to heretics. See his *Il Sindicato*, wherein he mockingly jests that the infinity of pasquinades might give "the greatest laughter" to heretics and so he

Although he wrote in Italian and later in French, his works were published in the majority of vernacular tongues. Thus, his works gave Protestants a taste of the pasquinades' vitriol.

Protesting the Pope's Princely Soul

The pasquinades and ritual assaults against the Capitoline statues were a protest against the increasing absolutism of the papacy and the nepotism inextricably connected with it. For the most part, they laid the blame of bad government on the pope's relatives rather than on the popes themselves and the institutions of the Papal States. Nevertheless, criticism touched those who had burdened the city with heavy taxes and who ruled with severity. The memory of these popes provoked Romans to attack their statues at the Capitoline Hill and to ridicule them with a rain of pasquinades.

The Roman people's criticism of popes during the vacant see reveals that they recognized what Paolo Prodi has called the two-souled nature of the early modern popes. After their return from Avignon in 1417, popes had become princes of the Papal States in addition to their earlier role as the Vicar of Christ on earth. Prodi argued that popes had increasingly emphasized their absolute authority through political propaganda.[146] After more than a century and a half of rule by *re-papi* (to use Prodi's term), Romans had conceived a new image of their rulers. This can be seen in the way the pope was treated in death. Protests and pasquinades concentrated on his failings as a secular leader by criticizing his wars, taxes, and bad government. Through words and deeds holy fathers became tyrants, arch-tyrants, and Neroes, to use the language of the pasquinades. Gigli could thus write regarding the deluge of pasquinades written against Urban VIII in 1644 that "they were too biting and unworthy of a Christian man in ripping apart the reputation of a pope with false calumnies, as if an impious and most wicked tyrant had died."[147] Taddeo Barberini also recognized this image of the pope when he complained that the numerous pasquinades written after his uncle's death "all conclude that Urban is a mere

"had the curiosity to collect [these pasquinades] in some of the more public places of the city in order to not allow the heretics to see them." See Leti, *Il Sindicato*, p. 184.

146 Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice, un corpo e due anime: La monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (1982; repr. Bologna, 2006), pp. 13–40 and 81–126.

147 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:429.

statesmen who never had any religion nor anything divine or civil about him so that they imprudently say that he had never been pope."[148]

Romans, as Machiavelli did in his political writings, could emphasize the secular soul of the pope. Yet, paradoxically, they still recognized him as a spiritual father. At the death of every pope, except, tellingly, Paul IV's, thousands of the faithful lined up to view the dead pontiff's body displayed in St Peter's Basilica and to kiss his feet. Despite their worldly concerns as princes, the popes still retained an aura of sanctity after they had died. This two-fold nature of the pope's soul demonstrated the limitations of papal absolutism. The people held popes to a conservative standard of governance to which as religious leaders they had to adhere or suffer both in word and deed during the vacant see. The sacralized soul of the pope, represented by his real body in St Peter's Basilica, was venerated, while his secular soul, symbolized by the statue, suffered ritual scorn and abuse.[149] This perhaps explains why the papacy was able to weather the desacralization of the monarchies that swept Europe in the 16th century.[150] The secular soul of the pope died but the sacred office continued.

In addition to suffering from public censure and having their memory assaulted, the families of tyrannical popes suffered after his death. Both the Carafa and the Barberini faced legal repercussions in the aftermath of the vacant see. Upon Pius IV's ascension in December 1559, enemies of Paul IV surfaced to pressure the pope to prosecute the Carafa nephews on a series of trumped-up charges. Pius IV, who had promised leniency to Cardinal Carafa in the conclave, immediately made a volte-face by restoring men to office whom Paul IV had removed from power. With the support of many Roman nobles and Capitoline officials, Alessandro Pallantieri, the first procurator of the Apostolic Chamber, and Girolamo Fedrici, the governor of Rome, encouraged Pius to prosecute Carlo on charges of embezzlement and heresy and his brother, Duke Giovanni, for the murder of his wife's lover. On 8 June 1560, Pius had the two brothers arrested and, after a year of interrogations in Castel Sant'Angelo, they were executed in March 1561.[151] The pope exiled the remaining Carafa, who fled to their native Naples. Only with the election of the family friend, Cardinal Alessandrino, as Pius V in 1566 were the Carafa able to return

148 BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 130r.

149 On the sacralized nature of medieval and early modern popes and kings, see Bertelli, *The King's Body*; Bloch, *The Royal Touch*; and Francis Oakley, Kingship: *The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 108–31.

150 Monod, *Power of Kings*.

151 On the fate of the Carafa nephews after Paul IV's death, see Georges Dury, *Le cardinal Carafa, 1519–1561* (Paris, 1882), pp. 305–16; and Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa*.

to Rome. But even then the Carafa name had been blackened by the words and deeds of their spiritual patriarch's vacant see. The Venetian ambassador Renier Zen in a report of 1628 to the Senate could still refer to the "hated house of Carafa."[152]

The Barberini likewise faced tremendous hostility after the vacant see. Antonio Barberini helped elect Innocent X after Philip IV employed his right of exclusion to block the cardinal's first choice, the Florentine cardinal Giulio Sacchetti. After his coronation, Innocent promised to lower taxes on bread, to the contentment of the populace, and ordered Antonio to turn over his family's account books so that he could inspect them for evidence of fraud during the War of Castro. Although he failed to keep his promises regarding the taxes, Innocent initiated legal proceedings against the Barberini, causing Antonio to seek the protection of his ally, Cardinal Mazarin, in France at the end of September 1645. His brothers, Taddeo and Cardinal Francesco, joined him in January 1646 after Innocent had several family servants arrested.[153] Only after a series of lengthy negotiations did Innocent allow the Barberini to return to Rome with their full rights and privileges as citizens. Thus, they fared better than the Carafa, as Antonio kept his office of cardinal chamberlain and continued to play an important role in the Curia until his death in 1671. Moreover, the acquisition of the Duchy of Montelibretti from the Orsini family transformed them into titled Roman nobles.[154]

The ritual assaults in word and deed against popes could also effect change—even if it was only temporary. The Savoyard ambassador Carlo Muti informed the duke that Cardinal Ludovico Madruzzo, when he heard of the assault on Sixtus V's statue, "begged the people not to make such a demonstration against a person who had been the Vicar of Christ on earth," and furthermore ordered money withdrawn from the papal treasury to purchase bread for the city.[155] Madruzzo's act sought to restore some of the dead pope's credibility and to protect the papacy as a sacral institution. Forty years earlier, Paul III's actions may have been motivated by a fear of popular retribution. His last actions before he died on 10 November 1549 were to repeal several taxes,

152 FSL, W.b 132 (146), "Relatione della Corte di quattro Amb.ri Veneti ne' principia dei Pontificati di Urbano VIII, Innocenzo X, & Alessandro VII," fol. 143r.

153 For the Barberini after Urban VIII's death, see Gigli, *Diario*, 2:456, 462–63, and 682.

154 For the Barberini rule over Monte Libretto, see Caroline Castiglione, *Patrons and Adversaries: Nobles and Villagers in Italian Politics, 1640–1760* (Oxford, 2005).

155 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, m. 11, letter of Carlo Muti to the duke of Savoy, 31 July 1590, n. p.

"much to the satisfaction of the city," in the words of the Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo.[156]

Romans of all ranks who participated in the ritual assaults against papal statues rarely faced repercussions for their actions during the vacant see. Criminal records from 1559, 1590, and 1644 fail to turn up members of the tumultuous crowds, despite the fact that the state had the power to discover ringleaders through an extensive spy network and through the recourse of torture in interrogations. Conversely, the rioters could receive a pardon. Pius IV issued a bull pardoning the *Popolo Romano* and their supporters who assaulted the statue of Paul IV in the vacant see of 1559.[157] There was a lack of will because a full inquisition would have turned up most of the city, including members of the Roman nobility, civic government, and even the Curia. Papal authorities took a sterner stance against pasquinade writers and their scribes because, unlike ritual assaults against statues, words on paper had a long-lasting and far-reaching influence. They could be copied, printed, and circulated throughout Italy and Europe, and consequently end up in the hands of enemies of the papacy.

The protest, often violent, of the vacant see was endemic to the political and social structures of the papacy. Romans may have complained about nepotism and even staged protests against the memory of "tyrannical" popes, but they never seriously considered revolting against the papacy. The Venetian ambassador Alvise Mocenigo, alluding to the years of the Avignon papacy, astutely saw that the people reaped too many benefits from the popes and their government to entertain the idea of breaking away from their rule.. In his report of 1560 to the Venetian Senate, Mocenigo described the ambiguous relationship that the Roman people had with their two-souled ruler:

> It would be easy for the *Popolo Romano* in these vacant sees to seize the city of Rome, but then they would not be able to hold onto to it for themselves. Rather they are content to stay under the Church than any other prince. One trusts that it must be difficult for them to rebel against the Holy Church. In particular, they greatly fear that if they do not carry themselves affectionately and faithfully that a pope might decide to move the see to another place or city. This would be the total ruin of Rome because it would rapidly become diminished.[158]

156 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 10 November 1549, *CSP*, 5:274.

157 ASV, Bandi sciolti, vol. 1, "Bulla S.D. N.D. Pii Papae IV absolitionis excessum Populi Romani see Apostolica vacante per obitium fe. Re. Pauli Papae quarti," 15 May 1560, p. 49.

158 "Relazione di Luigi Mocenigo," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 4:39–40.

CHAPTER 6

The Conclave and the People of Rome

According to tradition and practice the conclave, located in the Sistine Chapel and the surrounding halls of the Vatican Palace, was locked to prevent outside political machinations from influencing the divinely inspired election of the pope. In theory, the hand of God in the form of the Holy Ghost inspired the decisions of the cardinals ensconced in the conclave. The cardinals were to place personal ambitions and worldly concerns to the side in a collective and harmonious effort to choose Christ's Vicar. Despite this intention, fortified by papal bulls and a host of guardians the Vatican, the conclave drew the attention of princes, Roman nobles, and the populace of the city, curious to acquire news regarding the election, to discuss its proceedings, and to influence its outcome.

Historians have long sought to peer into the conclave in order to understand the inner workings of the papal election. Since the multivolume works of Leopold von Ranke and Ludwig von Pastor, scholarly interest has focused on the political machinations, factional intrigues, and ceremonial and electoral procedures that took place *inside* the conclave.[1] Recently, scholars have started to examine what took place *outside* the conclave. Within the past few years, studies on betting on the election, rumors, and ritual pillages have explored how the people of Rome inserted themselves into the election and forcefully expressed their opinion on its process.[2]

This chapter seeks to broaden this research by examining the ways Romans, from ambassadors to the proverbial man on the street, took part in the election from the outside. Efforts to discover the conclave's secrets stimulated a market for news in the form of rumors and newsletters. The passionate

1 The classic works on the politics of the conclave are those of the Catholic Ludwig von Pastor, *HOP*, and Protestant Leopold von Ranke, *The History of the Popes*. More recent and less confessional works on the politics of the conclave include: Baumgartner, *Behind Locked Doors*; Melloni, *Il conclave*; Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*; and several articles in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700*, eds. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge, Eng., 2002). Until the beginning of the 16th century the conclave was often held in locations outside the Vatican and, at times, beyond Rome.

2 For a sampling of this scholarship, see Villard, "Incarnare una voce," pp. 39–60; Villard, "Le conclave des parieurs," pp. 375–403; Hunt, "The Conclave," pp. 355–82; Hunt, "Betting on the Papal Election"; and Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*. For a useful summation of the current research, see Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 205–311.

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curiosity of the populace in events taking place in the conclave subjected the papal election to an intense scrutiny—one that reflected the public opinion of the city. However, public opinion in Rome reverberated with many voices: ambassadors and factional parties sought to sway the election through rumor and violence, brokers who took wagers on the selection of the future pope attempted to manipulate news of the election to make a profit, artisans and laborers tried to express their preference for a magnanimous pope who would supply the city with bread. Although they formed a discordant choir of voices and opinions, each of these segments of Roman society—despite being barred from the conclave—took part in its own way in the election, and in some cases may have even influenced the cardinals ensconced within the Vatican's sealed walls.

The Porous Conclave

Since the institution of the conclave in 13th century, utmost secrecy shrouded the papal election in order to keep it free from outside influence. The papal bull *Ubi periculum* of Gregory X (1274) established the conclave and the rubrics regulating the election that would be modified in the early modern era with the bulls *In eligendis* (1562), *Aeternis patris filius* (1621), and *Decet Romanum pontificem* (1622).[3] Gregory X's goal was to hasten the election and to prevent Roman Barons from infiltrating the election process, all to avoid repeating the three-year vacant see that brought him to the papal throne in 1268. The bull stipulated that after nine days of mourning the pope's death, the cardinals were to gather in the city where the pope had died, in order to elect his successor. This gave the cardinals who were not present at the pope's death the opportunity to travel to the conclave. In principle, the nine-day wait also allowed cardinals outside of Italy to participate in the election. On the tenth day of the vacant see, the cardinals were sequestered in the conclave. If the cardinals failed to agree upon a pope after three days, the guardians of the conclave would reduce their rations. After another five days without a result, the cardinals would be served only bread, water, and wine. In this monastic environment cardinals

3 On the bulls *Ubi periculum* and *In eligendis*, see Del Re, *La curia romana*, pp. 461–94; and Spinelli, *La vacanza*; and Melloni, *Il conclave*, pp. 45–47. For the bulls *Aeternis patris filius* and *Decet Romanum pontificem*, see Günther Wassilowsky, *Die Konklavereform Gregors XV (1621/1622): Wertekonflickte, symbolische Inszenierung und Verfahrenswandel im posttridentinischen Papsttum* (Stuttgart, 2010).

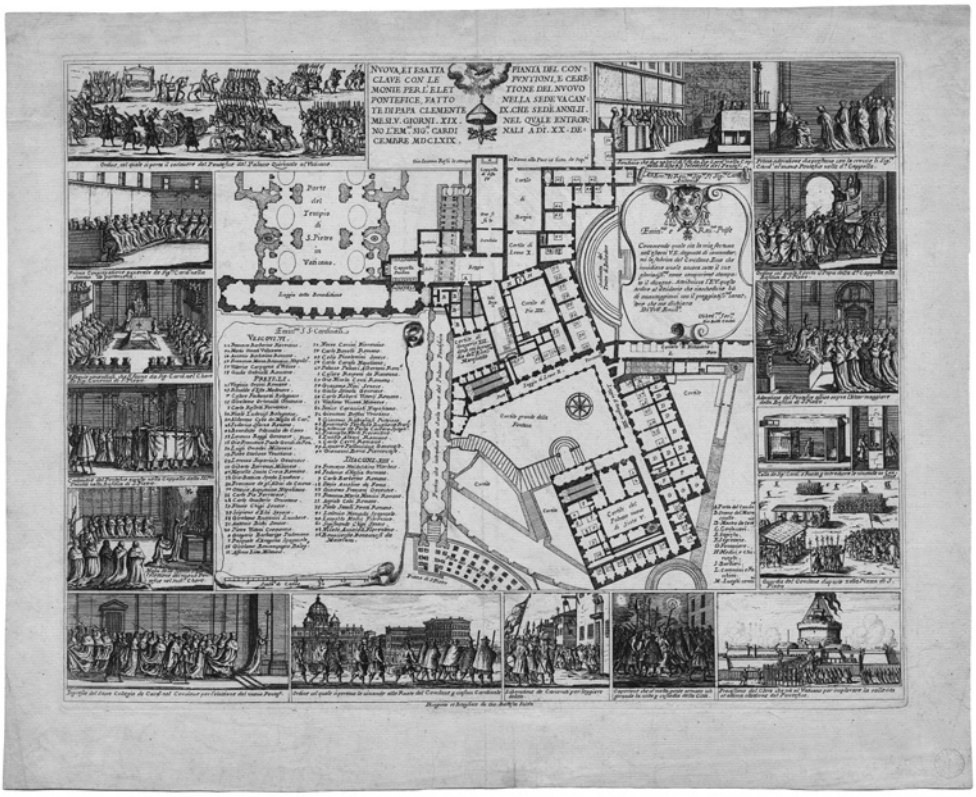

ILLUSTRATION 5 Nuova et essatta pianta del conclave con le funtioni e ceremonie per l'elettione del nuovo pontefice fatto nella sede vacante di Papa Clemente IX, *by Giovanni Battista Falda* (*Rome, 1670*).
IMAGE CREDIT FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

faced many hardships that could lead to illness and even death.[4] Gregory created the conclave to free the election from the influence of the local nobility and the people of Rome; in time, its rules later came to apply to the ambassadors of the great Catholic princes and the Italian principalities. In the early modern era this meant the agents representing the French Valois-Bourbons and the Spanish Habsburgs. In theory, anyone interfering with the election would suffer excommunication.

Over the next three centuries, however, the rules established by *Ubi periculum* were regularly flouted, so that Pius IV, after the nearly four-month—long

4 For examples of cardinals becoming sick and dying in the conclaves of 1644 and 1655, see Gigli, *Diario*, 2:428–30 and 735–37.

election in 1559, issued *In eligendis* (1562), which further restricted access to the conclave. This bull restated the prohibitions against outside contact, but it also focused on the activities of those ensconced in the conclave. One of the primary concerns of *In eligendis* was the predominance of servants, courtiers, and familiars of the cardinals. The Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo, for example, had blamed the disruptions of the election of 1549 on the four hundred men confined to the small space of the conclave.[5] The attendants of the cardinals, called conclavists, were also a major source of disorder and rumor-mongering. Pius's bull limited the number of conclavists each cardinal could have to two apiece to stop the trouble they brought to the election. Conclavists could not be the cardinals' relatives and must have served them for at least a year before the election. Each conclavist then had to swear an oath to uphold the laws of the conclave. For their services, the conclavists were richly rewarded: they received Roman citizenship and lucrative benefices.[6] Moreover, they were given 10,000 *scudi* to share among themselves, perhaps in a futile effort on the part of the cardinals to prevent the customary pillaging of the pope-elect's cell that frequently occurred after the election's announcement.[7]

In eligendis allowed for a variety of servants and officials to reside in the conclave to take care of the various needs of the cardinals and their conclavists. These included two masters of ceremonies, charged with regulating all of the rites surrounding the election of the next pontiff. Two surgeons, one apothecary, and two barbers took care of the medical requirements of the cardinals, while a chaplain and a sacristan saw to the spiritual health of the cardinals. A master mason and a master carpenter inspected and repaired the makeshift walls of the conclave. Lastly, a team of about twenty servants performed menial tasks, such as sweeping the chambers of the conclave and carrying wood inside. Although it never again reached Dandolo's four hundred men, the number of cardinals and their servants easily surpassed a hundred.[8]

To further protect the election from intrigue, Gregory XV issued two bulls, *Aeternis patris filius* (1621) and *Decet Romanum pontificem* (1622), which promulgated rules regulating the papal election and the space of the conclave. The first bull instituted secret balloting called scrutinies that would occur

5 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 15 January 1549, in *CSP*, 5:298.

6 Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 248–49. *In eligendis* made provisions for sickly cardinals to have a third conclavist.

7 Del Re, *La curia romana*, pp. 164–66. For the 10,000 *scudi*, see Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 17; and Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 10.

8 For the servants, see Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 18–19; Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 9; and De Luca, *Il dottor volgare*, 4:481–82.

twice daily in the morning and evening. The second bull made sure, among other things, that only the cardinals, their conclavists, and designated servants and officials could stay in the conclave once it was sealed. Although ambassadors immediately feared these reforms would limit their influence on the election, they did nothing to stop the politicking that took place both inside and outside the conclave.[9]

Ritual also signaled the opening of the conclave, and hence its closure to the general public. On the morning of the tenth day after the pope's death (although it was in many cases several days after this date), the cardinals gathered in St Peter's, where the cardinal dean of the Church sang the Mass of the Holy Ghost and a preacher gave an oration, exhorting them to forgo self-interest and to elect a worthy successor as pope. Next, the cardinals walked in a procession through the entrance of the Vatican Palace, the Sala Regia, and made their way to the Pauline Chapel, the site of the balloting, while papal musicians sang the hymn *Veni Creator*. Once there, the cardinals took an oath to obey the bulls and constitutions concerning the election of St Peter's successor. With the ceremonies completed, they cast lots in order to distribute the temporary wooden cells that had been constructed in the Sistine Chapel, the Sala Ducale, and the surrounding corridors.[10] Each cell was just large enough to maintain a cardinal comfortably with a table, a few chairs, a basin, a sacred painting, and a few personal belongings that included a bible. Servants decorated the cells with tapestries that reflected the relationship between the cardinals and the deceased pontiff. Cardinals whom the dead pope had nominated covered their cells with a purple tapestry; all others used green cloth. The insignia of each cardinal was hung over his cell's door.[11]

Tradition allowed for the conclave to remain open until the evening in order "to satisfy the curiosity of the people."[12] Romans of all ranks—the elite in carriages and the masses by foot—rushed to the Vatican to see the cardinals enter the conclave. Crowds surrounded the entrance to the conclave, shouting acclamations to the cardinals. Meanwhile, the ambassadors and Roman Barons entered the Vatican Palace at this time, using this privilege to give last-minute advice to their informants. Ambassadors jockeyed with one another

9 On the bulls and their influence, see Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 168–72.

10 Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 11; and Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 13–14. See also Del Re, *La curia romana*, pp. 483–85. Also, see the conclave maps of 1559, 1565, 1572, and 1621 in ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 26, 57–59 and 61.

11 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 23–24; and Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 7.

12 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 14–15.

to relay the desires and perhaps monies of their respective monarchs to the factional leaders among the cardinals. Naturally, it was the French, Spanish, and Imperial ambassadors, representatives of the Catholic monarchies, who sought the ears of the cardinals one last time before the door of the conclave was shut.[13]

At the onset of evening, the masters of ceremonies rang a small bell, signaling to the gathered crowd that it was time to leave. The cardinals then returned to their cells as the marshal of the conclave, a member of the ancient Savelli family, ushered everyone out, sometimes forcibly, and locked the only door to the conclave, which opened into the Sala Regia. He stationed guards at the door to watch it day and night.[14] The political importance of the last opportunity to converse with the cardinals is attested by the refusal of French ambassador François Annibal d'Estrées to leave at the sealing of the conclave in 1621.[15] Advising the pro-French party of cardinals, he kept the conclave open until two in the morning before Savelli convinced him to return to his palace. At the closing of the conclave of 1644, it was the Spanish ambassador's turn to tarry with the cardinals.[16]

As soon as the ambassadors left, the *capi degli ordini* ordered all entrances and openings to the conclave be closed and sealed.[17] Every door, window, and loggia was sealed with a combination of timber, wooden boards, and bricks, except for the main entrance to the conclave—which remained locked at all times—and four *rote*, or turning wheels, on which food and other necessary supplies could be sent to the cardinals. The cardinal chamberlain and one of the *capi degli ordini* inspected the sealing of the doors to make sure that they were airtight.[18] Once the conclave was closed, all forms of communication, both written and verbal, with the outside world was forbidden to the cardinals and their servants. The only point of communication between the cardinals and the outside world was a small window, covered by a cloth, near the main entrance. This allowed the cardinals to talk to papal officials and ambassadors on pressing matters of state when needed.

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13 For specific mention of the French, Spanish, and Imperial ambassadors, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 22 July 1623, fol. 199; and t. 96, *avviso* of 13 August 1644, fol. 215v.

14 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 14–15; and Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 12. ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 527v.

15 François Annibal d'Estrées, *Mémoires d'estat contenant les choses plus remarquables arrivées sous la régence de Marie de Medicis, & du règne de Louys XIII* (Paris, 1666), p. 314.

16 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:734.

17 Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 12.

18 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 29.

To help maintain secrecy and prevent tumults and fights erupting among the crowds that frequently gathered outside it, the *capi degli ordini* posted four different sets of guards. The first was a small guard of artisans under the leadership of Rome's communal government—a largely honorific post for the once powerful civic officials.[19] More important were the several thousand soldiers levied by the general of the Holy Church who watched the Vatican Palace and St Peter's Square.[20] The third contingent of soldiers, the Swiss Guards, led by the governor of the Borgo, guarded the entrances into the Vatican Palace and its neighborhood. Finally, the marshal of the conclave, a feudal position held by the ancient Savelli family until their extinction in 1712, levied four companies of soldiers for a total of five hundred men to protect the conclave.[21] The number of soldiers stationed around the conclave was striking, often reaching 2000 or more horsemen and foot soldiers.

The marshal, the chief guardian of the conclave, served as a go-between for the cardinals. He held the three keys that opened the only door of the conclave, located at the Sala Regia. The keys bolstered the marshal's authority; he even incorporated them into his banner for the duration of the vacant see. Those who wanted entrance had to carry special coins, usually made of lead, which bore his arms on one side and the symbol of the vacant see, the crossed keys beneath an umbrella, on the reverse.[22] He also placed a corporal and several soldiers to monitor each of the four wheels through which food passed to the cardinals. Because Savelli performed many of the same duties as the governor of the Borgo, the two officials frequently clashed with one another, particularly over possession of the keys to the conclave.

Whether in person or written form, the marshal controlled all access to the cardinals. Nobles and foreign ambassadors had to announce their intentions if they wished to converse with them on pressing matters of state. Since the marshal was typically busy elsewhere in the conclave, he sent a gentleman in his stead to greet noble visitors as well as late cardinals entering the conclave

19 On the artisan patrols, see Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics*, pp. 80–81.

20 On the ecclesiastical governor of the Borgo, see Del Re, "Il governatore di Borgo," p. 20.

21 Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 50–51.

22 Del Re, *Il maresciallo*, pp. 50–51 and 57. In addition to the coins, the marshal, his troops, and the Swiss guards often used passwords that allowed conclavists and fellow guards to enter restricted areas of the conclave. The password consisted of a name of a saint, followed by the name of a city. It was changed nightly. Each of the Savelli soldiers in their turn carried licenses so that the civic patrols of the *caporioni* would not interfere with their duties; see BAV, Chigiani, R II, t. 67, "Patente di Giulio Savelli per la *sede vacante* di Clemente XI," 29 September 1700, fol. 175r.

after its closure. Although the marshal could not welcome each visitor, each arrival was hailed with the roll of a drum and the unfolding of the Savelli flag.[23]

Despite stringent bulls, sealed walls, and a legion of soldiers, communication between those ensconced within the conclave and those outside continued unabated. The four *rote* were obvious weak points through which ambassadors and nobles could talk or pass notes to the conclavists and cardinals. Interregnal officials—both the marshal of the conclave and the governor of the Borgo—took diligent care to inspect the food that was brought to the cardinals through the *rote* with much fanfare. Twice a day, in the morning and the evening, the marshal's soldiers unlocked the *rote* to allow servants of the cardinals to bring chests containing food, dinnerware, and crystal. These items were placed on a table, then—in theory—thoroughly inspected for notes, newsletters, and ciphered letters pertaining to the conclave.[24]

Ambassadors, noblemen, and newsletter writers outside the conclave, and cardinals and conclavists inside, seemed to have bypassed these precautions with abandon. They passed notes and letters through the *rote* without much trouble from the marshal of the conclave or the governor of the Borgo. In many cases the turning wheels were deliberately left open by the interregnal authorities. In 1655, the marshal wrote to the *capi degli ordini* that "if the turning wheels remained opened, notes and other things might enter [the conclave]."[25] This was not an isolated episode. A newsletter of 1559 rhetorically lamented the openness of the conclave that elected Pius IV: "In effect the business of the conclave proceeds very foolishly without any order, a thing that is not usual, because now they [i.e., those inside] freely write and send letters inside and out."[26]

The servants and conclavists can account for a good deal of the news that was leaked out of the conclave and disseminated publicly. Near the end of the vacant see of 1549–50, the College of Cardinals expelled from the conclave some seventy conclavists, gentlemen, merchants, and royal agents, "who," Dandolo wrote, "were of no service there and troubled negotiations by sending out false advices [*sic*], and receiving others of the same nature."[27] It is telling that when Pius IV turned his attention to reforming the conclave in the bull

23 BAV, Chigani, R II, t. 67, "Riccordi per il Conclave: notizie avute dalla Casa Savelli [1721]," fol. 30v.

24 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 9. *avviso* of 29 July 1623, fol. 205r.

25 ASV, Conclavi, "Lettere spedite per la morte di Clemente VIII, Leone XI, Paolo V, e Gregorio XV," letter of 19 March 1605 from Monsignor Serra to the *capi degli ordini*, fol. 90r.

26 BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 23 September 1559, fol. 85r–v.

27 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 1 February 1550, *CSP*, 5:306.

In eligendis, he forbade merchants, ambassadors, and relatives of cardinals from acting as conclavists.[28]

The conclavists represented the cardinals and often had their consent in passing letters and information through the *rote*. Sometimes the cardinals themselves blatantly broke the rules.[29] During the first conclave of 1605, the *rote* remained "poorly guarded," allowing the cardinals to exchange notes with and talk to their allies waiting outside the conclave. To prevent further abuses, the Cardinal Priest San Clemente and the Cardinal Chamberlain Pietro Aldobrandini had the governor of the Borgo and the marshal of the conclave tighten the watch over the *rote* and change their guardians.[30] Three days later the situation had not improved. A newsletter noted that the Sacred College "discovered in the conclave that some by means of letters and other occult methods seek to have conversations with the cardinals over their dealings inside." Once again the *capi degli ordini* were forced to take stern measures. The next day they exhorted the governor of the Borgo to use more diligence "in seeing that no letters enter the conclave and that no one could speak at the rote."[31]

As the troubles of the conclave of 1605 attest, conclavists and cardinals often spoke directly to ambassadors, newsletter writers, and allies through the *rote*. Evidence shows that ingenious means were developed to facilitate covert conversations between those inside the conclave and those at the *rote*. The Savoyard ambassador Alessandro Scaglia di Vessua reported in a dispatch that he and other ambassadors made use of ciphers and a special cant (*gergo*) to communicate with the cardinals' conclavists and servants.[32] The satirist Leti also suggested that conclavists and cardinals corresponded with those outside in a "secret kind of language beforehand studied and agreed upon."[33] With these ciphers and cant, informants discovered the machinations taking place within the conclave as well as the results of the daily scrutinies. Leti indicated that the cardinals intentionally leaked out news to the public in order "to promote their different engagements and affections, or to prevent prejudicing

28 Del Re, *La curia romana*, pp. 485–87.

29 At the conclave of 1566, the governor of the Borgo discovered a letter in the glove of Cardinal Innocenzo Ciocchi del Monte. The discovery of the letter created a great stir in the court, but newsletter writers could not discover its contents, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1040, *avviso* of 15 January 1566, fol. 161v. For a similar concerns of the openness of the conclave, see the newsletter of 23 March 1605; BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, fol. 141r.

30 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 23 March 1605, fol. 141r–v.

31 For both quotes, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 26 March 1605, fols. 166v–167v.

32 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 33, letter of 29 July 1623, n. p.

33 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 26–27.

their hopes."[34] This implies that the cardinals themselves not only broke the regulations of the bulls that they supposedly reinforced, but also that they also recognized the value of both courting public opinion and manipulating it. In 1549, Dandolo wrote that the cardinals in the conclave, "may indeed be said to be at large, rather than locked up; for their dispatches go and come by ordinary mails as if they were each of them free in Rome, and not confined in the conclave."[35] A striking example of the cardinal's contact with the outside world comes from the same conclave. In his diary, Gigli recorded that Cardinal Antonio Barberini was so intent on "making a pope according to his taste" after the death of his uncle, Urban VIII, he was prepared to "die in the conclave" to secure his choice. To keep abreast of outside news and communicate with his allies and relatives, he had a hole made in his cell that corresponded to the Belvedere courtyard.[36]

Besides idle threats of excommunication, the Sacred College and its guardians could at times make examples of some malefactors who broke the rules of the conclave. Throughout the back-to-back vacant sees in the late summer and autumn of 1590, the conclave remained so porous that the College of Cardinals ordered the lieutenant general of the Church, Honorato Gaetano, to hang anyone who disturbed the conclave or sought to enter its premises. Ironically, this in-house order was leaked to newsletter writers, who then broadcasted it through Rome in their news reports.[37] Similarly, during the conclave of 1644, a servant of Cardinal Carlo Gualtieri was caught sending notes discussing the election to Cardinal Pamphili's sister-in-law, Olimpia Maidalchini. The *capi degli ordini* had the servant imprisoned in Castel Sant'Angelo, yet this move did little to stop the cardinals from having contact with the court and the city at large.[38]

The efforts of the *capi degli ordini* to secure the conclave were for the most part futile. The bulls sanctioning extreme closure remained unenforceable because the cardinals themselves blatantly disregarded them when it suited their purposes. Moreover, the *capi degli ordini* made exceptions for the powerful nobles, as a newsletter issued in July 1623 reveals:

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34 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 27.

35 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 15 January 1550, *CSP*, 5:298.

36 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:427.

37 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 24 November 1590, fol. 610v.

38 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:437. Other examples exist. The marshal of the conclave apprehended several interlopers from the conclaves of 1644 and 1655. For the arrests of 1644, see BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma notato da Deone hora temi Dio," fol. 125r. For those of 1655, see GRI, "Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi," t. II, fol. 38r.

> Many of these Roman Barons and other lordships were granted the favor of being able to visit the *rote* of the conclave to speak with the cardinals who were their relatives and [with whom they were] on friendly terms, always with the assistance of the *capi degli ordini* on the part of those inside and those on the outside with the help of Monsignor Cesarini, governor of the Borgo, and other prelates.[39]

The scene around the conclave was packed with barons, ambassadors, and their spies and servants hovering around the turning wheels to hear the latest news of the election and to pass information to the conclavists, servants, and cardinals ensconced inside the Vatican. In 1605, the Savoyard agent Monsignor Anastasio Germanico informed his lord that he "stood at the watch of the conclave so that the secretary of Cardinal di Giousa could give me account of what they had said of France." Germanico reported three days later that on the evening of March 25 "at a small window over the Pauline Chapel there appeared almost all the cardinals" and "St. Peter's Square was full of every sort of men."[40]

As this last account demonstrates, the conclave was never truly the "monastic prison" envisaged by papal bulls since *Ubi periculum*. The ambassadors of the small and great Catholic powers were keen to acquire information on the proceedings of the conclave and sway the election in favor of their clients. Perhaps the most discerning were the Venetian ambassadors, who routinely informed their Senate of the results of the balloting that was held twice daily and the general direction that the election was taking. While ambassadors from the Republic of St Mark were known for their penetrating analysis, other ambassadors, particularly those of the French and Spanish crowns, were better known for their attempts to sway the conclave. Thomas Dandelet has shown how, starting with Charles V and the conclave of 1521, Spanish monarchs invested much time, money, and effort into influencing the election.[41] Philip II regularly sent a list of acceptable candidates to his resident ambassadors to give to the cardinals at the onset of an election. Even the marshal of the conclave was on the Spanish crown's bankroll; Giulio Savelli received an annual pension of a thousand ducats from Philip IV to pay for the weapons

39 ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 9, *avviso* of 23 July 1623, fol. 205r.

40 For both quotes, see AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 21, letter of 25 March 1605, n. p.

41 Dandelet, *Spanish Rome*, pp. 35–36, 58–60, 65–67, 72, and 87. For a contrasting view of Spanish power in Rome, see Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca, 2005), pp. 63–64, 69–72, 78–79, 115–16, and 124–26.

and supplies needed by his soldiers for the duration of the vacant see.[42] The French, too, played this game, but they were less successful than Philip II in influencing papal elections until the start of the 17th century, once Henry IV had put an end to religious warfare and they had the resources to assert themselves more forcefully at the papal court.

During the 16th century, the monarchs of Spain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire acquired the right of exclusion; that is, they could signal to their ambassadors in Rome that one candidate would never meet their approval and should thus be removed from the election. This allowed the Spanish and the French, in particular, to exert greater control over the outcome of the election. This also meant it was extremely important for their resident ambassadors to keep informed of cardinals' politicking. Consequently, ambassadors tried every means to infiltrate the conclave. The Venetian ambassador Dandolo noted that throughout the conclave of 1549 the French ambassador appeared outside the *rote*, talking to allied cardinals and giving them letters from Henry II.[43] The Spanish ambassador Francisco de Vargas brazenly violated the papal bulls in 1559, visiting the conclave as often as four times a day.[44] The ambassadors took turns at the *rote*: a newsletter issued in 1644 commented that "Sunday the ambassador of Spain was at the audience of the conclave at the *rote*, Tuesday the ambassador of France was there, and also Duke Savelli, as the Imperial ambassador, went there often."[45] This newsletter shows that it was commonplace—even after Pius IV's bull of 1562—for royal ambassadors to talk to the cardinals by means of the "audience of the conclave at the *rote*." The latter term, "audience of the conclave," gave these illicit and impromptu meetings an air of officiality and showed that conclave guardians turned a blind eye to these forbidden transactions. The *capi degli ordini*, lacking the will and perhaps the means to enforce papal and interregnal *bandi*, thus conceded the point and allowed ambassadors to communicate the will of their monarchs to the cardinals in the conclave.

The Market and the Conclave

Political intrigue inspired ambassadors to plumb the secrets of the conclave and impelled cardinals to maintain correspondence with allies and associates

42 BAV, Chigiani R II, t. 67, fols. 15v–17r, letter from the Viceroy of Naples to Giulio Savelli, 22 November 1664.

43 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 7 December 1549, *CSP*, 5:281.

44 Baumgartner, *Behind Locked Doors*, p. 118.

45 ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 96, *avviso* of 3 September 1644, fol. 235r.

beyond its walls. However, the rest of the city as well as the courts and markets further afield in Italy and Europe also had an active curiosity about the election of the new pope and were eager for information concerning the happenings within the conclave. News of the papal election consequently became profitable, and, as with all political knowledge, a market for information coming from the conclave emerged in the 16th century. The suppliers of this knowledge were the *menanti*, writers of the *avvisi*, or manuscript news, whose work has informed much of the material in the early chapters of this volume. Through informants, spies, and rumor, the newsletters writers kept abreast of the daily activities of the conclave. In addition they also relied on a network of informers at the papal court as well as gossip from the streets and squares of the city. After obtaining their information, newsletter writers then reported these findings in their weekly newssheets for the edification and entertainment of their clients.

The writers of the newsletters, as we have seen, were an especially slippery group of entrepreneurs who kept apprised of the conclave and helped disseminate and create both true reports and false news. Newsletter writers, often notaries, lawyers, scribes, and authors in their own right, catered to a Roman and international audience eager for news of the conclave. In most cases they choose to write anonymously to avoid trouble with papal authorities, nevertheless some boldly signed their names to each newssheet.[46] They maintained a list of subscribers and employed several scribes to help copy by hand manuscript news (which was always fresher and less censored than printed news). Their subscribers tended to be merchants, gentry and noblemen, and ambassadors. Indeed, ambassadors often copied the newsletters word for word. A legion of couriers brought the news to the palaces and homes of subscribers and to the Roman post. The newsletters, as Brandon Dooley has argued, subjected political information to the market for the first time.[47]

The newsletter writers were ideally situated to gather news regarding the election. Most of them maintained shops in the *rioni* Parione and Ponte, located across the Vatican on the right side of the Tiber River. Situated inside these *rioni* were the Banchi and the Piazza di Pasquino, the two most important places, besides the conclave, to obtain news of the election. The Banchi, the financial heart of Rome, saw bankers and merchants deal not only in goods but also in news. Many newsletter writers, in fact, prefaced their sheets with the title, "News from the Banchi." Moreover, brokers (called *sensali*) who took bets on the papal election kept their offices in the Banchi and shared information with newsletter writers. On the one hand, in addition to using their own

46 For example, Bartolomeo Dardano signed his newsletters in 1623. See BAV, Urb.lat. 1093.

47 Dooley, *Social History of Skepticism*, p. 9.

spies, brokers relied on the newsletters to discover the outcome of the voting in the conclave in order to regulate the wagering on the election. On the other hand, the newsletter writers listed the daily rankings of the cardinals in the wagering, at times even giving an hourly reporting of the frantic betting going on at the Banchi. The Piazza di Pasquino, where the Roman post and the famous talking statue was found, also served as a site where Romans gathered to gossip, spread rumors, and engage in ardent conversations.

Most news emanated from the conclave, outside of which the newsletter writers gathered in droves. Nothing passed the notice of the newsletter writers. From a sampling of their newssheets, we know that they kept informed of factional infighting among the cardinals, the ambitions and plans of the *papabili*, and the results of the daily scrutinies. Newsletter writers even recorded squabbles and fights that took place in the conclave among the cardinals. In 1590, for example, they recorded that Cardinal Ascanio Colonna and Cardinal Francesco Sforza almost game to blows while heatedly discussing the election.[48] Like the ambassadors, newsletter writers hung around the *rote* to gather their information, sometimes waiting there until some important event took place.[49] The newsletter writer, Teodoro Ameyden, could causally report, "Friday morning I went to the conclave for a good spell as is my habit."[50] Once at the *rote*, they particularly relied on informants within the conclave—colloquially called *amici*—for their secret knowledge.[51] These "friends" were most likely conclavists and other servants of the cardinals bribed by the newsletter writers.

The thirst for news of the election, as well as its marketability, frightened prelates who advocated that the conclave should proceed solely from the hand of God.[52] Others expressed fears of that the politicking and factionalism taking place inside the conclave walls would be openly bared through the newsletters. This can be seen in a passage from a conclavist's diary of 1644. Commenting on the fervency of the public's curiosity to discover the intrigues of the conclave, he wrote:

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48 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 465r.

49 BAB, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 467r.

50 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 67v.

51 For references to informants, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 23 September 1559, fol. 85r; and BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 467r. Also see the letter of 15 September 1559 of Bartolomeo Concini to Cosimo I in which Concini refers to an "amico" in the conclave; ASF, Mediceo del Principatom Carteggio diplomatico, n. p.

52 Newberry Library, Castelvetro Manuscripts, vol. 59/2, "Instruttione di M. Gioan Francesco Lottini sopra le attioni del conclave."

> many writers in order to satisfy the repeated requests of their friends made known to the world the affairs of the conclave. And what is worse, many of them, failing to obtain the news of things more essential, curious and substantial went roaming for explanations in certain reports that have done well in the market.[53]

This information, once written up in the newsletters, quickly spread through word of mouth through the city and beyond, as many ambassadors copied newsletters verbatim. The reputation of the papacy was at stake. Since Pius V's constitution, *Contra scribentes, exemplantes et dictantes*, of 1572, the papacy had taken a hard line against the excesses of the newsletter writers. However, as Mario Infelise has written, the newsletters had proven to be "indispensable," even to those trying to destroy them."[54] During the vacant see, when news of the conclave was so essential to the city and foreign courts, this indispensability shielded the newsletter writers from direct retributions.

Closely related to the newsletter writers in their quest to profit from the papal election and the secrets of the conclave were the *sensali* (brokers) and their clients in the Banchi. First recorded in its institutionalized form in the late 15th century, the phenomenon of wagering on the papal election was a popular pastime among all classes in Rome and in other major Italian cities. As noted, the wagering was conducted through brokers, who located their offices in the neighborhood of the Banchi, the banking district of Rome and a Florentine enclave within Rome (as testified by the prominence of the national church San Giovanni dei Fiorentini).[55] Tuscan bankers and cloth merchants served as brokers, and to a lesser extent, so did nearby apothecaries and Jewish pawnbrokers. Clients, informed by newsletters, rumor, and brokers themselves, selected one or more cardinals that they considered *papabile* (that is, most likely to be elected). At the office of the broker, they would place one or more bets on these cardinals, which the broker duly recorded in his daybook. After receiving the money for the bet, the broker then gave the client a receipt (variously called *poliza* or *cedola*) as proof of his wager. In 1590, the Milanese mason Giovanni Antonio Peraccha purchased three *cedole* for several cardinals: one

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53 ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 453r.

54 Infelise, "Roman *Avvisi*," p. 215.

55 On wagering on the election, see Villard, "Le conclave des parieurs," pp. 375–403; and Hunt, "Betting on the Papal Election." For the brokers who organized the wagers in 16th-century Rome, see Francesco Colzi, "'Per maggiore felicità del commercio': I sensali e la mediazione mercantile e finanziaria a Roma nei secoli XVI–XIX, *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 6 (1998), 404.

for Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti at fourteen *scudi*, one for Cardinal Mondovi for nineteen *scudi*, and one for Cardinal Francesco Sforza for twenty-one *scudi*.[56] Similarly, the shoemaker Girolamo da Foligno purchased a *cedola* for Cardinal Girolamo della Rovere that would pay him a hundred *scudi* if della Rovere were elected pope.[57] Once the news of the election was verified, those clients with the winning cardinal would see their bets doubled, while brokers kept the wagers of the clients betting on losing cardinals. As one would expect, brokers commonly cheated clients, sometimes fleeing with wagered money and modifying or manipulating the betting through rumor and hearsay.[58]

As the examples of Giovanni and Girolamo attest, commoners eagerly kept up with the election and fervidly took part in the betting on its outcome. Records in the criminal tribunal of the governor of Rome confirm this. In addition to masons and shoemakers, all sorts of artisans and shopkeepers turn up in the governor's trials for placing bets in the Banchi, including tailors, smiths, hatmakers, used cloth sellers, and apprentices.[59] Even though commoners bet on the papal election, it was the elite of Rome—cloth merchants, bankers, and members of the nobility and gentry—who played for high stakes. At the end of the conclave that elected Julius III (1550), the banking house Ceuli won more than 20,000 *scudi* in the wagering. Most of those taking part in the wagering at the Banchi were not so fortunate: in 1590, five Florentine merchants went bankrupt after placing large sums on Cardinal Santa Severina.[60] Even cardinals informally took part in the action. In 1550, Dandolo wrote that "amongst the cardinals themselves, [there were] wagers of amber rosaries, perfumed gloves (which no one can do without), she mules, chains, and even of money."[61]

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56 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 407, testimony of Giovanni Antonio Peraccha of 4 November 1590, fol. 128r–v. Cardinal Mondovi was Vincenzo Lauro, the bishop of the Piedmont town Mondovi.

57 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 407, testimony of Girolamo da Foligno of 11 October 1590, fol. 95r–v.

58 Giorgio Roberti, *I giochi a Roma di strada e d'osteria* (Rome, 1995), p. 382.

59 Hunt, "Betting on the Papal Election."

60 For Ceuli, see the dispatch of Matteo Dandolo of 12 February 1550 in *CSP*, 5:310. For the bankruptcies among Florentine merchants, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 22 December 1590, fol. 668v. Cardinal Santa Severina was Giulio Antonio Santori; he was the bishop of Santa Severina in Calabria and the cardinal priest of San Bartolomeo all'Isola at the time of the conclave.

61 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 15 January 1550, *CSP*, 5:298.

Forty years later, Alberto Badoer, another Venetian ambassador, wrote that many cardinals had placed wagers with the brokers.[62]

Like the newsletter writers, the brokers and their clients sought to discover information related to the events taking place inside the conclave. More so than anyone else, it was important for brokers to know about the voting in the conclave, which they would then report to their clients in the Banchi. Much like the modern stock exchange, informants scurried back and forth between the conclave and the offices at the Banchi, reporting about which cardinal was rising in the voting. This in turn fueled bets on that particular cardinal, and also supplied newsletter writers and ambassadors with their information, both of which included the daily betting at the Banchi in their letters. A dispatch from Dandolo in 1550 gives us a real-time view of the election and how well-informed the brokers were of its proceedings:

> England [i.e. Cardinal Reginald Pole] got up both beyond 46 and 50 [votes], so that at the second hour he was at 80 percent, and 30 percent was wagered that he would be proclaimed in the morning. Salviati was at one and Sfrondrato at two. At the eighth hour there were so many sure votes for the Right Reverend of England, that they were at the point of adoring him and they had already commenced unnailing [*sic*] the cells, but the Cardinal of Trani, and his other opponents commenced exclaiming that in this way one might promote a schism, unless one scrutiny at least were made.[63]

He continued his dispatch, writing that,

> [i]t is therefore more than clear that the merchants are very well informed about the state of the poll, and that the cardinals' attendants in the conclave go partners with them in wagers, which causes many tens of thousands of crowns to change hands.[64]

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62 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Roma, f. 26, dispatch of 29 November 1590, fol. 139r. During the same vacant see, a servant of Sixtus V's sister, Camilla Peretti, was arrested by papal police for placing a bet of five hundred *scudi* in her name with the brokers; see ASR, TCG, vol. 411, testimony of Giovan Battista Baldessaro Veneziano, 23 October 1590, fol. 76v.

63 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 5 December 1549, *CSP*, 5:280–81. Sfrondrato refers to Cardinal Francesco Sfrondrati, bishop of Cremona and father of Niccolò Sfrondrati, later Pope Gregory XIV. Salviati refers to Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, bishop of Albano. The Cardinal of Trani refers to Cardinal Giovanni Domenico de Cupis.

64 Dispatch of Matteo Dandolo, 5 December 1549, *CSP*, 5:280–81.

Once again, it was the conclavists and servants of the cardinals who served as spies for the outside world. In early October 1590, a newsletter reported that the brokers kept "intelligence, traffic, and commerce" with the cardinals' servants.[65] Obviously, the cardinals could be complicit in the betting as well. Later that month, one Juan Aghilar, a servant of Cardinal Ippolito de' Rossi, was arrested in the Banchi while carrying tickets, a purse of twelve *scudi*, and three letters addressed to the Spanish ambassador, Cardinal Juan de Mendoza, and Cardinal Colonna, respectively.[66]

The influence of the wagering in the Banchi on the election and the rumors it generated among the populace frightened papal observers and city authorities. In listing the *papabili* of the conclave of 1555 to the Bishop of Feltre, the prelate Giovanni Carga complained that the brokers "discover the secrets of the negotiations [within the conclave], or at least the opinions of the majority [of the cardinals]."[67] In 1559, the Mantuan ambassador Emilio Stangheli, after giving his Gonzaga masters the state of the wagering in the Banchi, rhetorically ended his letter by informing them that only "the foolish" listen to what the Banchi have to say about the election.[68]

Yet listen the people did. When a cardinal rose in the betting, word immediately spread throughout the city and then quickly circulated among the people as a rumor of his election as pope. It often took hours to verify the veracity of the rumor and to quell the disturbances it wrought. In the conclave of 1559, the agent Giovanni Vertua wrote his patron, Count Brunoro of Gambara, that "from the conclave in the Banchi came a rumor that Cardinal Puteo was pope." According to Vertua, "immediately his bets, which were at nineteen *scudi*, rose to forty, and later that evening they reached eighty."[69] Similar episodes occurred throughout the 16th century, when wagering at the Banchi sparked rumors, which in turn spurred further betting on specific candidates.[70]

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65 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 13 October 1590, fols. 525v–526r.

66 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 411, testimony of Giovannu Aghilar Spagnolo, 23 October 1590, fol. 72r–v.

67 BAV, Chigiani R II, t. 54, letter of Giovanni Cagarra to the Bishop of Feltre, 11 May 1555, fol. 229r.

68 For Stangheli's of 8 November 1559, see ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch to the Duke Gonzaga of Mantova, fol. 685r.

69 Letter of Giovanni Tommaso Vertua to Count Brunoro de Gambara of 13 September 1559, in Rezzaghi, "Cronaca di un conclave," p. 537. Cardinal Giacomo Puteo was the Archbishop of Bari.

70 For other examples, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1038A, *avviso* of 18 May 1555, fol. 62r–v; BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avvisi* of 11 and 22 November 1559, fols. 101v and 104v; and Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of

Rumors started at the Banchi could provoke major disturbances. In the autumn of 1590, the Bolognese cardinal, Gabriele Paleotti, increased dramatically in the betting at the Banchi. Consequently, rumor of his election rapidly circulated throughout Rome, leading to a tumultuous chain of events that even misled the interregnal authorities. A newsletter captured the movement of the rumor as it spread from conclave to the Banchi, and then to the city:

> On Wednesday at the twenty-second hour rumor began to hold Paleotti as pope, and it went on increasing so that at the end of the morning he had risen to 70 in the wagering. Messengers were sent out [with the news of his election], his coat-of-arms were attached at different places in the city, the civic militias kept guard at his house beneath the conclave, and in St. Peter's candles were lit and other preparations made by the clergy.[71]

Later that evening the rumor died down, but as a result the *capi degli ordini* had carpenters reinforce the walls of the conclave and made the conclavists swear an oath over the Bible "not to send forth news" of the election. Additionally, they had the governor of Rome arrest several brokers and merchants of the Banchi as well as several men armed with outlawed handguns whom they kept as guards.[72]

Brokers intentionally created many of these rumors to influence the election and change the direction of the wagering. In 1555 Gian Pietro Carafa stood a good chance of being elected pope, ranking among the top three *papabili* in the first scrutiny of the conclave that eventually raised him to the papal throne. Brokers intentionally "spread the rumor that Naples [i.e. Carafa] had died," which conclave observers believed because he failed to attend the morning mass and the congregation of cardinals later that afternoon. Immediately, his rankings in the wagering at the Banchi fell. The rumor caused so much confusion that the cardinals ordered its originators to suffer the gallows and the

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17 April 1585, fol. 177v. Also see ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, dispatches of Stangheli of 4 and 8 November 1559, fols. 684r and 685r.

71 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 13 October 1590, fol. 525v. The Tuscan ambassador Giovanni Niccolini also traced the origin of the rumor to the Banchi, where, he wrote, Paleotti shot up to fifty and sixty in the wagering and that his coat-of-arms was seen throughout the city with the papal miter. The College of Cardinals ordered the governor of Rome to punish several brokers and Florentine merchants; see ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio diplomatico, Rome, f. 3301, letter of Giovanni Niccolini to the Grand Duke of 2 October 1590, fol. 208r.

72 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 13 October 1590, fols. 525v–526r.

confiscation of their property. This episode shows how public opinion could be manipulated by a small cadre of merchants for personal gain.[73]

The papacy made repeated efforts to stop the wagering on papal elections, but to no avail. At the opening of the conclave of 1555 the *capi degli ordini* forbade all wagering—a decree that the brokers and their clients largely ignored.[74] In his bull regulating the conclave, *In eligendis*, Pius IV banned gambling on the election, but again, brokers and their clients regularly flouted this clause. However, his bull seemed to be ignored for the next two conclaves, as a newsletter issued in 1585 reported that Romans wagered on the pope's election "in contempt of the bull."[75] These efforts were largely ignored because papal officials enforced them haphazardly. Cardinals held an ambivalent attitude toward wagering on the election: they condemned the pernicious effects it had on the election; at the same time, many enthusiastically participated in the wagering.

The situation began to change with the pontificate of the austere pope Sixtus V, who issued a torrent of *bandi* from 1587 to 1589 through his cardinal chamberlain, Enrico Caetani that curtailed all forms of wagering. These decrees begrudgingly allowed wagering on *maschio et femina* (betting on the sex of unborn children) and the promotion of cardinals, yet only through thirty brokers officially recognized and regulated by the Apostolic Chamber.[76] Gambling on the papal election, however, was still outlawed. In 1587 Sixtus and Caetani banned outright betting on the promotion of cardinals, not only because it subjected holy people to the affairs of the market, but also because "it ruined poor artisans."[77]

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73 BAV, Chigiani R II, t. 54, letter of Giovanni Cagarra to the Bishop of Feltre, 11 May 1555, fols. 230v–231r. In 1549, Dandolo expressed rhetorical concerns about the influence of the wagering on the election. In a dispatch of 13 November 1550, he lamented "the Pope, please God, will be created in the conclave, and not in the marketplace, by a majority of two-thirds of the cardinals"; see *CSP*, 5:276.

74 BAV, Urb.lat. 1038, *avviso* of 4 May 1555, fol. 54r.

75 BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, *avviso* of 20 April 1585, fol. 184r.

76 For the *bando* establishing the thirty brokers, see ASV, Bando Sciolti, ser. I, b. 2, *bando* of 10 August 1588, p. 40. Six months earlier, Caetani issued a *bando* forbidding wagering on feast days because of the "scant respect" it carried toward such holy days; see ibid., *bando* of 19 February 1588, p. 64. The Apostolic Chamber imposed a fine of five hundred *scudi* on brokers and their clients caught making wagers on feast days. This *bando* also tried to limit the amount people could wager to twenty-five *scudi*. Unable to stop the wagering at the Banchi, Caetani reissued the same provisions in a *bando* of 10 July 1589; see ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 203, p. 518.

77 ASC, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 203, *bando* of 17 December 1587, p. 527. The Apostolic Chamber fined lords and gentlemen five hundred *scudi* for wagering on the promotion of cardinals;

Sixtus's efforts to curtail wagering on matters of the church influenced the cardinals in the governance of Rome at his vacant see of 1590. Upon entering the conclave they issued an edict against wagering on the papal election.[78] After the brief pontificate of his successor Urban VII, the cardinals renewed the ban. Four days later, the governor of Rome, Giovanni Matteucci, showed that he intended to enforce the decree by having papal police raid shops in the Banchi where they confiscated tickets, arrested many brokers, and subjected them to the *strappado* (three hoists on a pulley) in order "to extract from them those people who had commerce with them." Matteucci planned to strike at the brokers' wealthy supporters, and his strategy succeeded; a newsletter writer complained, "this was a mess that will entangle and embrace many lords and several Illustrious Cardinals." He continued, writing that "this prohibition against wagering removes the freedom from this market and will make money flow to Florence, Naples and elsewhere" and that the loss of "the freedom of the conclave to talk [about the election], send forth notes, speak in jargon, and to know almost completely what happens inside."[79]

Released on a 10,000-*scudi* security, the brokers and merchants remained defiant and continued to accept wagers. Since the police now closely monitored the Banchi, they met their clients within the sanctuary (*franchigia*) of Cardinal Francesco Sforza, head of the *capi degli ordini*, who had ordered the brokers' arrest. Sforza had them chased away after his mother informed him of their illicit dealings. Nevertheless, they refused to give in, retiring first to the Orsini sanctuary in Monte Giordano until they were again forced to leave. Then they fled to the Colonna palace at the opposite end of Rome, before settling in Paolo Sforza's vineyard near Monte Cavallo. The choice of the Sforza obviously was *burla*, a joke mocking the cardinal, while that of the Orsini and Colonna was perhaps an attempt to enlist the protection of these powerful and venerable families.[80]

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artisans and "people of low condition" were sent to the galleys for five years and lost their wagers. Jews who bought and sold wagering tickets lost their money and were sent to the galleys *in perpetuam*. Brokers could also be sent to galleys. In a *bando* of 1589, Sixtus reluctantly allowed wagering on the sex of unborn children but renewed the ban on betting on the promotion of cardinals under pain of a hundred-*scudi* fine; see ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 203, *bando* of 5 December 1989, p. 526.

78 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 466r.

79 For all three quotes, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 17 October 1590, fol. 536r.

80 BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 27 October 1590, fol. 556r. Other brokers and their clients met under the protection of the *franchigia* of the Florentine ambassador; see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 411, testimony of Giovanni Aghilar Spagnolo, 23 October 1590, fol. 73r.

Urban VII's successor, the pious Gregory XIV, issued the definitive statement on wagering on papal elections. On 21 March 1591, in the bull *Cogit nos*, he outlawed—on pain of excommunication and perpetual banishment—not only betting on the outcome of papal elections but also wagering on the duration of pontificates and the promotion of cardinals. The bull complained of the sacrilege committed by brokers and their clients since "with the spiritual and the sacred they mix any sort of money and go about attaching to them the foulest customs of the market." It condemned them for forgetting that these "affairs belonged to God." Though Gregory's bull concerned the entire Catholic world, parts of it seemed specifically addressed to the brokers of the Banchi by targeting them as the fomenters of rumors and disturbances.[81] The papacy had the details of the bull printed in Italian and posted on the gates of the city, outside its churches, and on the doors of taverns.

The impact of *Cogit nos* on wagering on the election was immediately felt in Gregory's vacant see of autumn 1591. A newsletter written after Innocent IX's election reported that "in this last vacant see there were wagers made here, but [only] among a few."[82] Four months later, during the short-lived Innocent's vacant see, the Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Moro, noted the greater diligence that the cardinals employed against the brokers and their activities.[83] Gregory XIV's bull dealt the death knell to organized wagering on papal elections that took place through brokers at the Banchi. A final decree against the practice was issued as part of a general *bando* of the vacant see of 1605. However, by then wagering had gone underground.[84] Individuals may have made informal bets on the papal election, yet after the 1590s its institutionalized form at the Banchi had disappeared. The reports of conclavists and newsletter writers of the 17th century make no mention of this practice, and interregnal authorities, who still issued decrees against dicing, card-playing, and other forms of gambling, remained silent on the matter as well.

For the testimonies of the many brokers, merchants, and artisans arrested at the Sforza *franchigia*, see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 407, fols. 95r–130r, and vol. 9, fols. 199r–209v.

81 For both quotes, see Yale University, Beinecke Library, no. 254, "Bolla della Santità di N.S. Gregorio PP contra chi fa scommesse sopra la vita & morte ò sopra la futura elettione del Pontefice Romano ò sopra le promotioni dei Cardinali della Santa Chiesa Romana," 21 March 1591.

82 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, pt. II, *avviso* of 2 November 1591.

83 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 29, dispatch of 18 January 1592, fol. 334r.

84 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 5 March 1605, p. 212.

The Conclave and Public Opinion

Although the cardinals' efforts against wagering on papal elections were met with striking success, their attempt at controlling other forms of public discourse utterly failed. During the vacant see the cardinals in the conclave and the cowed civic government on the Capitoline Hill did not have the means to police political communication and public opinion. The populace boldly speculated on the outcome of the election, expressed opinions on the *papabili*, and pilloried the cardinals in the conclave. In this ludic and festive atmosphere serious work was done, since the people expressed a variety of opinions, hopes, and aspirations through public discussion.

Once the conclave was sealed, it became the focal point of the entire city, curious to discover the direction the election was taking place among the cardinals. On a daily basis, crowds of Romans gathered near the Vatican Palace out of a desire—to use the words of two servants—"to see the conclave."[85] The streets and squares around the Vatican and the Borgo regularly became clogged with people, horses, and carriages as everyone made their way to the conclave in the hopes of hearing news of the election. In 1605, the Savoyard agent Germanico commented on the number of carriages in St Peter's square as their occupants tried to get a glimpse of several cardinals who made an appearance in the window located in the Pauline Chapel. Astonished, he wrote "one could say all of Rome was there."[86] In 1655 the newsletter writer Gioseffe Gualdi wrote of the popular participation in the conclave, saying that the "crush of people to see the conclave was the greatest [he had ever seen], so that one could not walk [through the crowds]."[87] He especially noted the great number of women outside the conclave, showing that both genders could take an interest in the great political affairs of the papal capital.

Not only did Romans attempt to discover the secret affairs of the conclave, they also forcibly expressed their opinions regarding the election. Perched outside the conclave in St Peter's square, they shouted acclamations to candidates they preferred and execrations against those they opposed. When Cardinal Agostino Valier entered the conclave in 1590, crowds gathered outside the Vatican Palace cried out, "Viva Papa Valier," showing their preference

85 ASR, TCS, Processi, b. 67, testimony of Giovanni Battista d'Alberi and Benedetto Ponesino of 19 July 1623, fols. 420r–421r.

86 AST, Carteggio diplomatico, m. 21, letter of 25 March 1605, n. p.

87 GRI, MS, "Il diario di Gioseffe Gualdi, 1651–55," t. II, fols. 19v–20r.

for the Venetian prelate.[88] In his history of papal elections, Leti wrote that at the opening of the conclave of 1591, "opinion was so great that Cardinal Santi Quattro would succeed as pope that the little women and the plebe acclaimed in his passing" and "reminded him about justice, the needs of the poor, and to bring abundance [to Rome]."[89] Rome had been suffering through a famine throughout 1590–91; the people demanded a pope who would supply the city with abundant, affordable bread.

Negative opinions could be expressed as well. When rumors spread that Cardinal Antonio Barberini might succeed at getting his ally Giulio Sacchetti elected in 1644, "the people took it badly because they feared a pontificate similar to that of Urban VIII." The people so hated the Barberini pope and his clients that a day later a crowd stood outside the Vatican Palace shouting, "Don't make Sacchetti pope, he will pillage Rome!" The crowd's shouting was an obvious pun on the cardinal's name, as the Italian reads, "Non fate Papa Sacchetti, che sarà Roma saccheggiata."[90] Furthermore, it referred to Urban's burdensome taxes on grain, oil, and *vino romanesco* to support his family's ambitions.

Rumors expressing public opinion could originate from the shouting of the crowds outside the conclave. When Cardinal Francesco Sfroza arrived at the first conclave of 1605 with a large retinue of nobles and servants, the shouting of "Viva Sforza" caused many to speculate on his chances of becoming pope.[91] In 1644, at the arrival of the Roman cardinal, Gianjacopo Panciroli at the conclave, speculation rapidly spread that he would help his fellow Roman Giovan Battista Pamphili ascend to the papacy. These rumors reflected the desire of the populace not only for a Roman pope, but also for a pope who was not allied with the Barberini.[92]

Romans discussed the election throughout the city—in the streets, squares, taverns, and, above all, in the Banchi and the Piazza di Pasquino. The tone of this public talk could take the form of festive misrule and inversion. Romans often gathered in their own conclaves to elect a mock pope. In 1623, papal grooms attending the cardinals elected one of their numbers as pope. Imitating the official papal coronation ceremony, they enthroned him on a litter and carried

88 ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of Alberto Badoer to the Venetian Senate, 15 September 1590, fol. 476r.

89 Gregorio Leti, *Conclavi de' pontefici romani quale si sono potuti trovare fin à questo giorno* (S. l., 1667), pp. 283–84. Santi Quattro referred to Cardinal Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti, the cardinal priest of Santi Quattro Coronati. He was elected, taking the name Innocent IX.

90 For both quotes, see Gigli, *Diario*, 2:430.

91 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 5 March 1605, fol. 101r.

92 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:431.

him throughout the Basilica of St Peter's until stopped by Swiss guards.[93] The making of mock popes not only asserted the people's role in the election, but also served as a statement of public opinion and even outright defiance. In both 1591 and 1655 bandits and peasants in the Marches elected mock popes in opposition to hefty taxes on grain and other foodstuffs.[94] One of the first acts of the "pastoral pope" of 1655 was the abolishment of the taxes on salt and bread that Innocent X had retained from Urban VIII's pontificate.

Much of the talk focused on the qualifications of each cardinal and his chances in succeeding to the papal throne. Leti, for example, wrote that Romans "spent the best of their time in speculative discourse and political divinations" over the election.[95] Speculations could take on a more occult nature. In a popular form of omonancy, it was believed that the surname of cardinal might point to his election as pope.[96] Others looked for omens that would foretell the election's results: swarms of bees entering the conclave supposedly foretold the election of Maffeo Barberini in 1623, and a dove perching on the cell door presaged Giovan Battista Pamphili's election in 1644.[97]

Astrological prognostications stimulated public interest in the election and informed the public discussion regarding it as well. Forecasting the election was closely tied to the wagering in the Banchi, as Gregory XIV had made provisions against the practice in *Cogit nos*.[98] Nevertheless, predicting the next pope remained a pervasive activity despite the closure of the brokers' offices. Since *Cogit nos* had banned prophesizing the election, astrological discourse had to occur primarily through oral channels or had to be passed surreptitiously from hand to hand in manuscript form rather than published openly in printed treatises. Several manuscripts have survived from the conclave of 1623, included by archivists with accounts of papal elections from Pius II to

93 BAV, Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 29 July 1623, fol. 578r. For the classic treatment of misrule, see Davis, "Reasons of Misrule," pp. 97–123. On mock kings in medieval and early modern Europe, see Sandra Billington, *Mock Kings in Medieval and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford, 1991); and Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 180–81 and 184.

94 For 1591, see Agostino Lapini, *Diario Fiorentino di Agostino Lapini, dal 252 al 596*, ed. Giuseppe Odoardo Corazzini (Florence, 1900), p. 307. For 1655, see Alessandro Ademollo, "Il macinato a Roma nel secolo decimosettimo," *Rivista europea/Rivista internazionale* 2 (1877), 443–44. For the mock popes, see Hunt, "Violence and Disorder," pp. 373–75.

95 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 75.

96 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 76.

97 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:125 and 2:431. The dove may have had a double omen for Pamphili's election, as it was also a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which was supposed to guide the decision of the Sacred College in the electoral process.

98 Yale University, Beinecke Library, no. 245, "Bolla contra chi fa scommesse," 21 March 1591.

Innocent X. These accounts give the horoscope of several cardinals deemed *papabile* and explained the celestial influences that may aid the candidate in his bid for the throne of St Peter.[99] Predictions were also made regarding the length of the conclave. In 1605, several astrologers, after reading the signs in the heavens, predicted a long vacant see after the death of Clement VIII.[100] The impact that astrologers had in shaping public opinion can be seen by the assault of a Jewish astrologer in 1592. Four masked men broke into the home of the astrologer, threatening him at dagger point to quit predicting the election in favor of Cardinal Tolomeo Gallio.[101] Evidently, whoever hired the assailants must have believed in the power of astrologers in foretelling the election, or at least in influencing public discourse on it.

Perhaps the best barometers of public opinion in Rome—as we have seen in the previous chapter—were the pasquinades. Joining the witticisms of the court with the scatology of the streets, these libelous poems served as the voice of the city in criticizing the dead pope and his family. But they also cast aspersions on the election and the cardinals in the conclave. Preoccupied with assaulting the popes at the onset of the vacant see, pasquinade writers often waited until the conclave was sealed before dipping their vitriolic pens against the cardinals.[102] For example, after the conclave was closed on 9 August 1644 the pasquinades started to assess the election in addition to criticizing the Barberini. Gigli commented in his diary that

> many other compositions, jests, dialogues and judgments were made over the cardinals, publicizing the habits, vices, inclinations, and defects of each one, especially those who aspired to the papacy, with a judicial discourse on the results if they succeed in becoming pope.[103]

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99 ASV, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocentio X," "Scritture sopra sette Card.li Papabili p la presente Sede Vacante," fols. 753r–758r; and "Discorso politico astrologico sopra il futuro pontefice," fols. 916r–919r. Ironically enough, they did not think that Maffeo Barberini, later Urban VIII, had much chance of becoming pope.

100 BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 16 March 1605, fol. 129r. These same astrologers predicted that Cardinal de' Medici would win the election in April and bring prosperity to the city. Half of the forecast proved correct: the cardinals raised Alessandro de' Medici to the papal throne as Leo XI in April, but he died later that month after a reign of less than two weeks.

101 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 8 January 1592, fol. 16r.

102 A newsletter of 20 April 1585 commented that "Pasquino keeps himself quiet enough, perhaps waiting for when the conclave will be closed"; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1053, fol. 185r.

103 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:430.

Examining the qualifications and faults of *papabili* and, above all, the potential consequences of their pontificates through pasquinades can be traced back to the vacant see of Leo X (1521), in which the Dutch Pope Adrian VI was elected. A veritable maelstrom of commentary issued from Pietro Aretino and Anton Lelio, the first great pasquinade writers, as well as from a host of anonymous authors. Aretino and Lelio provided the tropes from which pasquinade writers over the next two centuries modeled their own invectives against the Sacred College and the papal election.[104] Often they simply listed the personalities of the cardinals in conclave with the intent of exposing their foibles and vices. In mocking the cardinals and informing their audience about the election, pasquinade writers used scabrous language that common folk could appreciate and wedded them to classical themes and figures. Other enduring themes included lamentations about the state of the election to the Holy Spirit and Saint Peter, both of which were obvious slights to the idea that the cardinals put aside their own ambitious and factionalism in selecting a holy father.[105] Along these lines, another trope had the cardinals making promises to the Roman people if elected pope, perhaps an allusion to the participation of the populace in early papal elections.[106]

Portraying the cardinals playing various games of chance was also a popular motif that writers used in discussing the *papabili*. Naturally, the wagering at the Banchi inspired a good many pasquinades, as some authors had the cardinals placing bets on the outcome of the election. Starting with Aretino in 1521 pasquinades began playing on the theme of fortune through the use of the popular card games *tarocchi* and *trionfi*.[107] In this latter trope the election was determined through a shuffling of a pack of *tarocchi* cards. Similarly, a pasquinade written in the conclave of 1559 has the cardinals playing the card game *trionfi* to determine an occupant of St Peter's throne. One cardinal would "trump" the rest in his quest to become pope. Another pasquinade of that

104 See Cesareo, *Pasquino e pasquinate*; Rossi, *Pasquinate di Pietro Aretino*; Gnoli, *Le origini di Maestro Pasquino*; and idem, *La Roma di Leon X*, pp. 309–27.

105 Valerio Marucci; Antonio Marzo, and Angelo Romano, eds., *Pasquinate del Cinque e Seicento* (Rome, 1988), 2:214–15.

106 This theme was first introduced in the vacant see of Leo X. Extant copies of pasquinades influenced by this theme exist for the conclaves of 1523 and 1559. See Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, 1:161, 1:193–94, and 2:918–19.

107 On the *tarocchi*, see Pietro Marsili, "I tarocchi nella vita di società, la vita di società nei tarocchi," in *I Tarocchi: Le carte di corte, gioco e magia alla corte degli Estense*, eds. Giordano Berti and Andrea Vitalli (Bologna, 1987), pp. 95–106.

conclave had the election riding on a chess match.[108] These ludic pasquinades fit the festive nature of the vacant see, serving both to entertain and to inform. Pasquinades playing on theme of the *tarocchi* examined the qualifications and vices of the cardinals through the twenty-two "triumph" cards.[109]

The intent of these pasquinades was often to inform the city and court about the election, and perhaps allow it to reach an opinion about the great events taking place in the conclave. This can especially be seen with the dialogues that took place between Pasquino and Marforio, another ancient *statua parlante* located on the Capitoline Hill. Pasquinade writers had the two of them discuss the various characteristics of each of the *papabili*, frequently in ribald terms. For example, one pasquinade had Pasquino ask Marforio if he thought Cardinal Giovanni Morone would make a good pope. Marfario answered, "No devil! He has been questioned by the Inquisition. You know very well that he had been in Castel Sant'Angelo since he wore his hair as a hermit." In this dialogue, Cardinal Crispo would not make a good candidate, according to Pasquino, because he had too many children.[110] Both criticisms reveal the conflicting nature of the desires of the court and the city in general: Romans wanted neither a saint nor a sinner; rather, they desired a pope who would ensure the wheels of patronage ran smoothly without committing egregious nepotism. A reforming pontiff was not desired. Romans displayed great

108 For pasquinades having the cardinals place wagers on the election, see Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, 1:139 (issued during the election of 1521), 1:141–42 (also issued in 1521), 2:776–79 (issued during the conclave of 1549–50), and 2:908–09 (issued during the conclave of 1559). The pasquinade of Aretino using the metaphor of betting on the election paints an evocative picture of Rome during the conclave: "Rome is all in wagering and disputes over who it wants as pope"; see Marucci et al., *Pasquinate romane*, 1:139. For the use of *tarocchi* cards as a theme, see ibid., 1:195, 177–80 (issued during the conclave of 1521) and 2:916–18 (issued during the conclave of 1559). The wording of these two pasquinades, although written more than thirty years apart and by different authors, is almost identical, with only the names of the cardinals changing. For the game of *trionfi*, see ibid., 2:863–67. For the chess match, see ibid., 2:870–71.

109 Villard argues that the pasquinade of the cardinals playing *tarocchi* was a device that conveyed rumors; see "Incarnare una voce," p. 42. It is hardly likely that a trope dating to the conclave of Adrian VI (1521) that was used repeatedly in the 16th century could provoke rumors. It was rather a didactic and satirical trope. The triumph cards (known in modern tarot as arcane cards) depicted allegorical and cosmological figures, such as the Devil, the Wheel of Fortune, the Fool, the Sun, and the Moon.

110 Marucci, *Pasquinate romane*, 2:944–48.

disappointment with the elections of Adrian VI in 1521, Pius V in 1566, and Sixtus V in 1585.[111]

Dialogues proved a popular means to broadcast information on the conclave well into the 17th century, and the genre changed little throughout this time.[112] For example, a dialogue written in 1667 had two characters, based on the ancient Greek philosophers, named Critilao and Diogene discuss the qualities of the cardinals thought to be *papabile*.[113] The motif was so entrenched in the minds of those familiar with the papal election that the satirist Gregorio Leti had the prostitutes who met in his imaginary conclave to elect Alexander VII's successor participate in a dialogue examining the qualities of each of the *papabile*.[114]

Public opinion concerning the election was also reflected in the rumors surrounding the ritual pillaging that Romans staged at the pope-elect's palace and his cell in the conclave. As we have seen in the last chapter, these pillages had nothing in common with the attacks against papal images and family after a pope's death. However, intense debate still centers on what some scholars have called "electoral" or "interregnal" sacks. Following Carlo Ginzburg, scholars have asserted that the sacks reflected the close relationship of the people with the pope and served to highlight his transformation, upon the election, into "superpersona."[115] In contrast, Joëlle Rollo-Koster has argued in numerous studies that they reflected the *vox populi* of the people, a vestige of their ancient participation in the election and an assertion of their opinion.[116] My analysis of the rumors informing attempted pillages supports Rollo-Koster's argument—with the pillaging of the pope-elect's palace and cell, the people expressed their joy with the election's result and their expectation of a munificent pontiff, one

111 For the reaction against Adrian VI; see the pasquinades of Pietro Aretino, *Sonetti lussuriosi e pasquinate* (Rome, 1980), pp. 100–115; and Gnoli, *La Roma di Leon X*, pp. 324–26. For the reaction against Pius V, see von Pastor, *HOP*, 17:40. For Sixtus V, see John Florio, *A letter lately written from Rome* (London, 1585), n. p.; and Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Dellla Valle," p. 254: "Throughout Rome neither man nor woman celebrated except for his familiars."

112 See BAV, Barb.lat. 3870, Satire ne' Conclave di Alessandro VII, Clemente IX e Clemente X.

113 BAV, Barb.lat. 3870, Satire ne' Conclavi di Alessandro VII, Clement IX, e Clement X, "Critolao, e Diogene s'incontrano di notte nel Conclave l'uno con la statera, l'altro con la lanterna, ciascercando, et osservando le qualità de' cardinali Papabili," fols. 1r–7r.

114 Gregorio Leti, *Il puttanismo romano*, ed. Emanuela Bufacchi (Rome, 2004). Leti's satirical account of an imaginary conclave was written in 1666, a year before Alexander VII actually died.

115 Ginzburg and the Bologna Seminar, "Ritual Pillages," pp. 20–41. See also Bertelli, *The King's Body*, pp. 39–59; Alain Boureau, *The Myth of Pope Joan*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 2001), pp. 97–100; and Rehberg, "Sacrum enim opinatur," pp. 201–37.

116 Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 198–201.

who was preferably Roman. However, it also shows how rumors reflected many voices—often conflicting—and how rumors frequently originated in partisan attempts to pressure the cardinals in the conclave.

The pillages associated with the election were principally provoked by rumors, often begun at the Banchi, near the conclave, or at the house of one of the *papabili*. From there they quickly moved through the city by word of mouth, often aided by the confused actions of interregnal authorities. We have already seen how, in 1590, speculation of Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti's election, originating in the Banchi, started a major chain of events in the city that led to crowds gathering at his palace to sack it. Again, during the conclave of 1592, adherents of Paleotti began to shout "Pope Paleotti" through streets, causing crowds to rush to the conclave and to his house. The tumult provoked by rumor caused the vice castellan of Castel Sant'Angelo, the fortress protecting the Vatican, to close the sole bridge leading to the Borgo, and the *caporioni*, leaders of the civic militia, to rush to watch his house in order to prevent a possible sack. The rumor dissipated after more reliable information leaked out of the conclave.[117]

Paleotti was not an isolated case. Every conclave sparked rumors of a cardinal's election that led the populace to attempt a pillage of his palace. Sometimes a rumor followed hard on the heels of another. On one night of the second conclave of 1605, simultaneous reports of Antonio Maria Sauli's and Francesco Mantica's election prompted crowds to turn up at their palaces with the intent to sack them. The practice continued well into the 17th century, and as with the Paleotti example, rumors may have been accidental or intentionally provoked by a cardinal's partisans. Regardless, Romans enthusiastically embraced rumors. In 1644, for examples, news of Marcello Lante's election was provoked throughout the evening of 28 August due to fighting between soldiers outside the cardinal's palace. When some of the soldiers attempted to seek sanctuary at the palace, the people became convinced of his election and crowds roamed the streets, shouting, "Pope Lante." Once again, the Ponte Sant'Angelo was closed and guards rushed to protect the cardinal's home.[118]

Despite precautions, interregnal authorities were caught off guard. As late as the conclave of 1655, rumors of Antonio Barberini's election incited Romans to attempt the sacking of his properties in the city. According to the newsletter writer Gualdi, crowds were able to make it across the Tiber, and "immediately people filled all of St. Peter's Square and the Borgo."[119] The Barberini had just

117 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avviso* of 18 January 1592, fol. 36r.

118 BC, cod. 1832, "Diario della città e corte di Roma," fol. 65r.

119 GRI, MS, "Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi," t. II, fol. 26v.

enough time to send more men-at-arms to their palace at the Quattro Fontane and to the Cancellieria. The diarist Gigli reported that the rumor began because the two factional leaders of the conclave—Barberini on the French side and Gian Carlo de' Medici of the Spanish party—were seen conferring together.[120]

The rumor of Barberini's election dissipated before the late evening. Other rumors proved more difficult to dispel. Later during the same vacant see, a rumor arose on the night of 19 February that the cardinals had elected the Roman cardinal, Ulderico Carpegna. Once this rumor circulated through Rome, a crowd raced to his palace in the quarter of Trevi. The combined efforts of the *caporioni* and the cardinal's private soldiers prevented the crowd from pillaging his residence. Nevertheless, the rumor survived until morning, perhaps because of Carpegna's Roman credentials. The following day, soldiers of the marshal of the conclave announced Carpegna's election by beating a drum through the streets, and the marshal himself went to the Vatican to congratulate the cardinal on his good fortune.[121]

As the last example demonstrates, public opinion heavily favored a Roman. The first recorded sacks took place in 1378, after the papacy had returned to Rome following the Babylonian Captivity of the Church in Avignon. Romans stood outside the conclave shouting their desire for a Roman pope and sacked the palace of the Roman cardinal, Francesco Tibaldeschi, when rumors swirled that he had been elevated to the papal throne. The rumors and the pillages they sparked reflect, as Rollo-Koster has argued for the conclave of 1378, a form of popular participation in the election. Formerly, Romans had participated in the election process, but since the creation of the College of Cardinals in 1059, they merely voiced their consent to the new pope when he was presented to them with the formula, "Habemus Papam."[122] A united *vox populi* never existed, as factions had played a dominant role in papal elections since the Middle Ages and continued to do so into the early modern era. Yet rumors and pillages could represent the assorted desires of a large segment of the populace of Rome.

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120 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:735.

121 GRI, MS, "Diario di Gioseffe Gualdi," t. II, fol. 39r.

122 On the pillages and the *vox populi* of Rome, see Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 199–201. Also see Villard, "Incarnare una voce," pp. 39–68; Lucius Lector, *Le conclave: Origines-histoire, organisation, legislation ancienne et modern* (Paris, 1894), pp. 8–12; and George Boas, *Vox Populi: Essays in the History of an Idea* (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 8–13. On the efforts to hide factionalism in the early medieval accounts of papal elections, see Philip Daileader, "One Will, One Voice, and Equal Love: Papal Elections and the *Liber Pontificalis* in the Early Middle Ages," *Archivium Historiae Pontificiae* 31 (1993), 11–31.

The popularity of Alessandro Farnese at papal elections from 1555 to 1585 is a case in point. The grandson of Paul III remained a strong contender for the papal throne, since he came from a Roman family and was known for his magnanimity. In each conclave of this period, rumor and popular ritual worked in Farnese's favor. In 1555, two soldiers assigned to watch the conclave scuffled near Farnese's apartment in the Vatican Palace. One of the soldiers, losing the fight, called out Farnese's name to invoke his protection, which was granted. According to a letter of the prelate Giovanni Carga, "the people, without eyes and who heard things wrongly, heard these violent screams and interpreted that Farnese was pope." Servants and the crowd outside the conclave quickly took the news of Farnese's election to the rest of Rome. Carga wrote that the rumor "had grown to such a point that one had never seen a greater confusion, or joy, in this city." The people attempted to sack the Farnese palace but were stopped by the *caporioni*. Nevertheless, the rumor continued to circulate throughout the early evening, with painters selling commemorative copies of the Farnese coat-of-arms mounted by the papal tiara, and all through the streets, according to Carga, people of all ages "joyfully shouted Farnese, Farnese, a thing that might awaken Paul III."[123] The false news of Farnese's election even reached cities and towns in the Papal States and elsewhere on the Italian peninsula, which sent letters congratulating the cardinal on his election.[124] In the course of this tumult, which lasted almost three hours, Farnese's ranking shot up at the Banchi. The rumors proved false, yet the people still "held that [Farnese] will become pope in the conclave as his grandfather had done."[125]

In 1559, the Mantuan ambassador reported a similar episode involving Farnese. Once again, a fight outside the conclave provoked a rumor. This time, a criminal questioned by papal police sought to escape by crying out Farnese's name. Crowds near the conclave quickly spread the news of the cardinal's election across of the Tiber to the Banchi, which in turn caused the gamblers to place more bets on Farnese's name. From the Banchi, the news then spread throughout the city. As a consequence, papal soldiers stationed themselves at his palace and along Ponte Sant'Angelo.[126]

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123 BAV, Chigiani R II, letter to the Bishop of Feltre of 18 May 1555, fols. 233r–234r.

124 Giulio Coggiola, "I Farnesi ed il Conclave di Paolo IV," *Studi storici* 11 (1990), 457.

125 BAV, Urb.lat. 1038, *avviso* of 18 May 1555, fol. 62v. The newsletter described Rome as "topsy-turvey" at this time, and along with Carga gave the rankings at the Banchi. The writer of the *avviso* gave a different account of the rumor's origin, writing that it was caused by a conclavist who shouted Farnese's name from one of the *rota* of the conclave. Either way, the results demonstrate the populace's desire for Farnese.

126 ASM, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Rome, f. 889, dispatch of 4 November 1559, fol. 684r.

Twenty-six years later, rumors of Farnese's election again originated from brawling outside the Vatican. The vice castellan of Castel Sant'Angelo had several rounds of cannon shot to quiet down a large fight that took place in the Banchi (and that had spilled into the Borgo). Once the people heard the cannon fire, the customary rite announcing the election of a pope, the rumor spread that "Farnese had been made pope and the people with an immeasurable joy congregated everywhere." Although the rumors were quickly squashed, the people cried "Farnese throughout the evening but in vain."[127] When the cardinals finally elected Sixtus V on 24 April 1585, the governor of Rome ordered the cannon at Castel Sant'Angelo to remain silent to prevent further confusion.

In each case, the people interpreted an event through the lenses of their own desire to have a liberal pope from Rome. Farnese best fit this bill throughout the second half of the 16th century.[128] He consistently won the popular goodwill yet never succeeded in the conclave. Candidates, rather, were made by the cardinals, who had to hammer out the selection of pope among themselves with a good deal of intervention from princely powers. Hence the proverb: cardinals, who entered the conclave as *papabili*, left it as cardinals.

Even though the voice of the people remained unheeded by the cardinals, it does not mean their efforts were in vain. We must remember that this was a society in which free speech did not exist. The vacant see and the papal election opened an opportunity for them to express their opinions and their desires for good government. This was a hard-won right because interregnal officials sought to prevent ritual pillaging and expressions of popular opinion. In addition to posting guards at the conclave and the houses of the *papabili*, officials regularly barred entry into the Borgo by closing Ponte Sant'Angelo, the only entry point across the Tiber from Rome to the Vatican.[129] Despite these efforts, Romans managed to surround the conclave to express their desires.

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127 For both quotes, see Gatta, "Diario di Lelio Della Valle," p. 254.

128 Farnese died in 1589, but in the conclave of the following year, Cardinal Marco Antonio Colonna, scion of a venerable Roman family, proved a popular candidate. Rumors fixated on his election, and on 11 October 1590 they grew so believable that crowds attempted to sack his family palaces throughout the city. Another popular candidate, Cardinal Serafino Razali, although not a Roman, was the favorite of the streets in the conclave of 1605. A newsletter of that year reported that Serafino "would be pope if one went by the gossip of the people which believed he would provide for abundance and would be a good pastor." For the Colonna, ASVenice, Dispacci degli ambasciatori al senato, Rome, f. 26, dispatch of Alberto Badoer to the Venetian Senate, 13 October 1590, fol. 113r–v. For Serafino, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, a*vviso* of 7 May 1605, fol. 9r.

129 For example, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of11 May 1605, fol. 15r; and BC, MS 1832, Diario della città e corte" fols. 121r, 130r, and 134r–135r.

During the conclave of 1565–66, Romans insistently shouted their acclamations for Farnese. As we have seen, in 1585 they refused to stop their joyous cries after the news of Farnese's election had been proven false. Even when the election did fulfill their desires, the people could always demonstrate their disapproval through their grumbling and expressive lack of joy (which was expected at every announcement of a pope's election). The translator and pamphlet writer John Florio informed his English audience that the customary celebrations in 1585 in honor of the new pope, the stern Sixtus V, were "nothing so much as was accustomed, and that because it is thought the people would rather have Cardinal Farnese."[130]

The *vox populi* of Rome did not speak with one voice in all cases; as we have seen with the rumors started by brokers of the Banchi and by the cardinals' partisans, it could be manipulated as well. More often than not Romans had to align themselves with one of the many factions that not only included the dead pope's party of cardinals but also pro-French and pro-Spanish parties. From the late 16th century onward, the supporters of the latter two parties, no doubt led by loyal minions of the French and Spanish monarchs, competed with each other in shouting "Viva Francia!" or "Viva Spagna!" outside the conclave.[131] The rival factions often taunted each other, as the Hispanophile newsletter writer Ameyden recorded in his diary.[132] Brawls between the Spanish and French factions sometimes occurred outside the conclave.[133] These factional squabbles could promote further disorder in the city by stirring up rumors of an election, as happened in the conclave that elected Paul V in 1605. In the midst of a fight between two captains of rival factions outside the conclave, one of them began to shout, "Help, Help!" (*salva, salva*), which nearby crowds interpreted as "Sauli, Sauli!" As with many rumors born in the vacant see, the noise misled both authorities and the people. The *caporioni* and the crowds surrounding the Vatican simultaneously rushed to his palace.[134]

The conclave of Leo XI, also in 1605, was perhaps one of the most virulent. Tensions between the Spanish and French were heating up after a somewhat

130 John Florio, *News from Rome* (London, 1585), n. p.

131 See, for example, the conclave of Paul V (1605); Remi Couzard, *Une Ambassade à Rome sous Henri IV* (*Septembre 1601–Juin 1605*) *d'après des documents inédits* (Paris, 1900), pp. 380–81.

132 BC, MS 1832, "Diario della città e corte," fols. 114r–115r.

133 For a fight between a supporter of Henry IV and a member of the Catholic League outside the conclave, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 22 December 1590, fol. 161r.

134 For the rumors and joy at his election, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of 18 May 1605, fol. 266v; and Couzard, *Une Ambassade*, p. 386. Also see the Tuscan ambassador Giovanni Niccolini, who wrote of the incident to the Grand Duke, ASF, Mediceo del principato, f. 3321, letter of 9 May 1605, fol. 168v.

dormant period in the late 16th century, and the Spanish were ready to get revenge for losing the first conclave of that year, which had elected Francophile Leo XI. Throughout the vacant see, clashes between the adherents of Domenico Toschi, the French candidate, and Pietro Valier, the Spanish candidate, sparked alternative rumors of each one's election that had crowds gathering at the palaces of both cardinals. However, when the cardinals compromised and elected Cardinal Camillo Borghese, from a Romanized family of Sienese origin, the crowds went wild with joy at the prospect of a "Roman" sitting on the throne, forgetting their factional differences and that Borghese, although professing his neutrality throughout the conclave, had close ties with the Spanish stemming from his time as a nuncio to Spain.[135]

The Election and Its Public Reception

Once the cardinals had decided on a candidate, they broadcasted his election in a series of private and public ceremonies. They first adored him in the Sistine Chapel, bestowing kisses upon his feet, hands, and cheeks, a custom that all visitors would perform in front of the pope throughout his reign. Then, in a ritual that proclaimed his new status, the cardinals dressed him in a white tunic representing the purity of Christ and asked what name he wished to use throughout his pontificate. After selecting a new name, he swore an oath before an altar in the Sistine Chapel. The cardinals then adored him once more before carrying him in a litter to the window overlooking St Peter's Square to present him to the crowds gathered outside the Vatican Palace to see the new head of the papacy. The cardinal dean told the gathered crowd of Romans and pilgrims, "Habemus Papam," and recited his name. The pope, in his first public act, blessed the crowd. This ritual had its origins in the participation of the laity in the election of the Bishop of Rome at the time of the early Church.[136]

So that the entire city would know of the pope's election, the vice castellan had cannon shots discharged from the fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo; the marshal of the conclave had his soldiers fire several salvoes in St Peter's Square;

135 For the rumors and joy at his election, see ASV, Segretario di Stato, Avvisi, t. 1, *avviso* of 18 May 1605, fol. 266v; Couzard, *Une Ambassade*, p. 386; and von Pastor, *HOP*, 25:35–36. Paul V's father, Marcantonio, had moved the family from Siena in 1541 and quickly insinuated himself and his family in the Roman social and political milieu.

136 See Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 85; and John Florio, *A letter lately written from Rome*, n. p.

and the masters of ceremonies sent heralds throughout the city to announce the news in the streets. Despite these efforts, as we have seen with the false news of Farnese's election of 1585, ascertaining the veracity of the papal election was fraught with trouble. Rumors of the election, both true and false, typically preceded the announcement from the Vatican. The news of the elections of Gregory XV in 1621 and Innocent X in 1644 had anticipated the Sacred College's official pronunciation.[137] Rumors could even delude the most astute observers; on the election of Julius III in 1550, the Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo put more credence in the single cry of England than in the many shouts that Monte had won the election that he heard through the streets.[138] Miscommunication, so often the cause of the persistent tumults surrounding the election, could occur at the announcement of the pope. In 1644, crowds misunderstood, or rather wanted to misunderstand, the acclamations in honor of Innocent X upon his election, hearing "Viva Papa Crescentio" instead of "Viva Innocentio." A large crowd soon gathered at the house of Crescentio, a Roman cardinal with a reputation for magnanimity. Once the people learned that Pamphili was pope, "they remained doubtful, and did not celebrate loudly because he was held to a strict man and not very liberal."[139]

Once the news had disseminated throughout the city, people of all ranks rushed the conclave. Before announcing the news, the cardinal dean, one of the *capi degli ordini*, ordered the walls of the conclave torn down, and signaled for the crowds outside to enter by displaying the cross and crying a salutation in honor of the new pope.[140] In an obvious vestige of their former participation in the election process, Romans of all ranks sought entry into the conclave at this time. Nobles and their retainers were the first to enter the now open conclave, seeking either to embrace their relative, if he had been elected,

137 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:81 and 2:431. The cardinals were still hammering out the details of Pamphili's election when news leaked of his ascent to the throne of St Peter.

138 "Relazione di Matteo Dandolo of 1550," in Albèri, *La relatione degli ambasciatori*, ser. II, 3:347. England referred to the English cardinal, Reginald Pole, whom many favored to win the election. Monte referred to the Roman cardinal, Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte, who took the name Julius III upon his election.

139 Gigli, *Diario*, 2:431. Pietro Paolo Crescenzi was from an old Roman family. Despite being a Roman, Pamphili's severity did not sit well with the populace.

140 See Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 86. Upon the election of Innocent X, Antonio Barberini, as cardinal dean, "displayed the cross to the People as is customary for the rupture [of the conclave] near the Piazza di San Pietro"; see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 789v. See also BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 465r, for another reference to the custom of showing the cross to the people as a sign to enter the conclave.

or to be the first to congratulate the pope on his election. Upon hearing the false news of Cardinal Marco Antonio Colonna's election in 1590, familiars and minions of the family broke into the conclave, victoriously carrying his cousin Martio inside. Leti noted that, after the election of Innocent IX in 1591, carpenters barely had time to break down the walls before a "flock of nobles" burst into the Vatican to see the pope. Similarly, with the rumors of Cardinal Sacchetti's election in 1644, Taddeo Barberini and Sacchetti's brother, who stood outside with a large retinue of men, sought to break into the conclave.[141]

Following close on the heels of their noble superiors were crowds of Romans, who had an entirely different reason for rushing inside the conclave. They sought to pillage the cell of the newly elected pope. Dating to the first conclave held in Rome after the Babylonian Captivity in 1378, customary pillages of the cells and palaces of the pope-elect occurred at the announcement—true or not—of his election. As we have seen, the desires of Romans for a pope to their liking sparked rumors and sacks throughout the vacant see, but the practice was more akin to a "right of spoils" claimed by the new pope's subjects. By the time the crowds made their way into the Vatican, the cell of the pope-elect had already been looted. Conclavists claimed the books, clothing, and eating utensils that he kept there.[142] In order to stop looting by the conclavists, who saw it as their payment for having served in the harsh conditions of the conclave, Pius IV's bull, *In eligendis*, forbade the ransacking of the pope-elect's cell. To placate their desire for loot, the bull also offered them a collective compensation of 10,000 *scudi* and 2000 more in vacant benefices.[143] All this proved in vain as the conclavists continued their customary pillages well into the

141 For Colonna in 1590, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1058, *avviso* of 12 September 1590, fol. 465r; for Innocent XI's election, see Leti, *Conclavi de' pontefici romani*, p. 288; and for Sacchetti's false election, see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 772r.

142 The most familiar example can be found in Pius II's account of his own election in 1458; see his *Commentaries*, eds. Maragret Meserve and Marcello Simonetta (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), p. 199. For a selection of early modern examples, see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II ad Innocenzo X," fols. 356-v (for Marcellus II's election in 1555); Leti, *Conclavi de' pontefici romani*, p. 272 (for the false election of Cardinal Paleotto in 1590); and ASV, Segretario, t. 96, *avviso* of 17 September 1644, fol. 250r (for the election of Innocent X). Also see Philip Skippon's journal of his trip to Rome in 1663, *An account of a journey made thro part of the Low Countries, Germany, Italy, and France* (London, 1746), p. 684. Although not present during the vacant see, he either read about or was informed about the electoral pillaging, as he noted in his journal that "When a new one [pope] is chosen, his friends and relatives ransack and carry away what they can find in his palace."

143 See *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum*, 7:230–36. In the 16th-century manuscript treatise on conclavists, Fulvio Gualtieri warned conclavists to avoid scandals, which included

18th century. The cardinal chamberlain, Annibale Albani, for example, issued a decree threatening conclavists with fines at the beginning of the vacant see of 1721 if they looted the cell of pope-elect.[144] This effectively ended the practice of conclavists looting the pope-elect's cell. It signaled the modernization of the papal bureaucracy by severing the close bonds that conclavists and papal servants shared with their lord.

Since the conclavists had already pillaged his cell, the people often looted the cells of other cardinals and seized furnishings inside the Vatican and even parts of the palace itself. The cardinal chamberlain forbade the pillaging of both the cardinals' cells and the Vatican at the election of the new pope; nevertheless, as a *bando* issued as late as 1691 indicates, Romans largely ignored his admonitions.[145] The edict expressively prohibited Romans from, "on the day of the election of the Supreme Pontiff . . . removing, taking, carrying away, hiding, stealing, giving away, and offering any sort of belonging found in this Conclave." Moreover, it offered a list of items—many quite mundane, but useful—that Romans should not pillage. These included, among other things, buckets, washtubs, iron pipes, bells, bricks, windows, tables, ropes, lanterns, and iron trimmings of stoves. The punishment for disobeying the decree was excommunication and restitution of any damages done to the Vatican.[146] The decree promised that the various guards of the conclave would carefully watch out for any malefactors. Well before the chamberlain's decree, a vigilant protection of the conclave was the norm. In 1621, upon hearing the news of Gregory XV's election, a crowd of "all the classes" poured into the conclave. The "prompt and vigorous opposition of the guards" prevented the populace from looting the place.[147]

More often than not the principal target of the people's looting was the palace of the pope-elect, or cardinals rumored to have been elected to the papacy.

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pillaging the cardinals' cells at the election of a pope; see BAV, Barb.lat. 4648, "Conclavista da M.r Fulvio Gualtiero a M.r Cipriano Saracinello," fol. 20r.

144 Lector, *Le conclave*, pp. 270–71. Alexander VIII issued a decree in 1690 against the looting of the conclavists as well.

145 Extant *bandi* issued by the cardinal chamberlain exist for the vacant sees of Gregory XIV (1591) and Alexander VIII (1691); see ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 17 October 1591, p. 235, and *bando* of 11 April 1691, p. 237.

146 ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 26, *bando* of 11 April 1691, p. 237.

147 "Relazione di Girolamo Giustinian, Antonio Grimani, Francesco Contarini, e Girolamo Soranzo, 1621," in Barozzi and Berchet, ser. III, *Relazioni degli Stati europei*, 1:116. For an earlier example in which Ascanio della Corgna and his soldiers prevented a pillage of the Vatican at the election of Marcellus II in 1555, see the Newberry Library, Castelvetro Manuscripts, vol. 59/2, "Il Conclave di Marcello Secondo, MDLV," fol. 28r.

Papal authorities long inveighed against this practice. Prelates at the Council of Constance in 1417 condemned what was then the relatively new practice of sacking both the cell and house of the new pope. The prohibition went unheeded, and Leo X issued a bull at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516 that excommunicated those taking part in the pillaging of the newly elected pope's palace. After the council, popes no longer took any actions against the customary pillages, but cardinals attempted to forestall them.[148] Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries the cardinals regularly flouted the decrees they had made while in the Sacred College against keeping large numbers of soldiers at their palaces. The soldiers were needed, as Leo's bull complained that mobs sought to force their way into the cardinal's palace "by breaking down the doors or digging under the wall . . . unless a defense is made by armed guards."[149] Some cardinals also hid their most valuable possessions for the duration of the vacant see. At the first whispers of a cardinal's election, his relatives immediately fortified the family palace and other properties in the city.[150] The *Popolo Romano* likewise responded by sending the *caporioni* to the cardinal's palace.[151]

The cardinals' defensive measures worked, as none of the attempts at sacking the new pope's palace in 16th- and 17th-century Rome were successful. Elsewhere in early modern Italy, cities and regions with connections to the newly elected pope saw successful pillages of his property. In 1559, the rumor that Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga had been elected pope stirred the Mantuan subjects of his nephew Guglielmo to pillage some of his benefices. The election

148 For the Council of Constance and Leo X at the Fifth Lateran Council, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 152–53. For the Fifth Lateran Council, also see Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London, 1990), 1:649–50. The council considered pillages at the election of the pope to be a novel custom, as the bull against the practice complained "there has recently grown up in Rome a damnable abuse and lack of restraint in wrongdoing."

149 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1:650. In his guidebook on the cardinalate, the humanist and papal clerk Paolo Cortesi recommended that each cardinal keep the guard room and armory on the lower level of his palace, should "any danger or disturb seem likely to arise." See Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D'Amico, *The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's De Cardinalatu* (Rome, 1980), pp. 77–78.

150 For example, when the Domenico Toschi was rumored to have been elected during the first conclave of 1605, his relatives and retainers "fortified his palace so that it would not be plundered"; see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 19 March 1605, fol. 131v. For the cardinals' hiding of personal property, see John Florio, *A letter lately written from Rome*, n. p.: "In times past they were woont to find there many things of value, especially household stuff, but now they have but the least hope to bee Pope, cause theyr servants secretly convey there all the best, leaving nothing but such things as they care not for losing."

151 See chapter 1 for the *Popolo Romano* and chapter 3 for soldiers.

of the Bolognese popes Gregory XV (1621) and Benedict XIV (1740) provoked looting in Bologna, as did the election of the short-lived pope Urban VII (1590), who had served as governor of Bologna in 1577–78.[152] The authorities of these areas, not expecting a sack, did not take the precautions to prevent them.

The sacks were a right, a "privilege," as one account put it, which Romans were not to be denied as they expected some compensation.[153] As Agostino Bagliani-Paravacini has shown, since the return of the papacy to Rome after the Great Schism, the people claimed some of the wealth and property of the newly elected pope through pillages.[154] Beginning with Paul II, pope-elects conceded the point and distributed large sums of money to dissuade the crowds from attempting to plunder their palaces. Other cardinals took a different approach; with the false report of Cardinal Sacchetti's election, members of his family gave wine to the celebrating crowds that lined the streets of Rome from St Peter's to his house, "so that no one could pass through the people."[155] Parsimonious popes started off on the wrong foot when they refused to give something to the people. When the cardinals elected the Dutch Pope Adrian VI, the people complained that he did not have a palace to sack. Upon hearing the news of her brother-in-law's election as Innocent X, Donna Olimpia Maidalchini had all of the Pamphili property hidden away. With nothing to pillage or receive, the people began to imprecate the Pamphili name as well as the new pope because they had flouted the tradition.[156]

The pillaging of the newly elected pope's property in Rome might best be seen as a *charivari*. In order for the populace to accept and consent to the new pope's rule, he had to pay them. And in paying them, the pope demonstrated his magnanimity, and in this regard the sacks served the same function as the dispersal of coins to the masses at his coronation. Popes, influenced by Counter-Reformation dictates on decorum, discontinued the latter practice. Pius V, wanting to help the truly needy rather than the vagabonds who gathered in St Peter's Square, gave alms to charity instead of dispensing money at his

152 Ginzburg, "Ritual Pillages," pp. 21 and 25.

153 Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 18. This expectation was clearly tied to the upcoming coronation ceremonies of the pope, in which money was dispersed to the people; see Bertelli, *The King's Body*, pp. 97–103.

154 On the dates of the pillaging of the cells and palaces of pope-elects, see Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 114–15. Also see Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, pp. 168–223.

155 For Paul II, see von Pastor, *HOP*, 4:16–17. For Sacchetti in 1644, see ASV, Conclavi, "Conclavi da Pio II a Innocenzo X," fol. 773r.

156 For Adrian VI, see Baumgartner, *Behind Locked Doors*, p. 97. For Maldachini, see Leti, *Vita di Donna Olimpia Maldachini*, p. 436.

coronation ceremonies. Sixtus V and subsequent popes followed this custom.[157] Romans, however, continued to demand payment from their new leader in the form of customary pillages, which persisted throughout the early modern era. The pillages thus reflected the close bonds they had with the pope, which were only severed with the onset of modernity.

Besides the pillages, the election of a new pope was met with official and private celebrations. The papal officials had church bells rung, drums beat, and trumpets sounded.[158] The vice castellan of Castel Sant'Angelo also fired cannons for the next three nights, both to celebrate the successful election and to broadcast the approaching end of the vacant see (which would finally come to a close with the new pope's coronation). Through the night and the next three nights the city was aglow with the light from bonfires that burned from its towers and squares and from the fireworks that ambassadors and Roman nobles shot before their palaces.[159] The festivities were politicized, as the French and the Spanish both tried to outdo each other in honoring the new pope, especially if their candidate had been elected. Upon the election of Leo XI in 1605, the French and their supporters yelled through the streets, "France has won!" "Bless the French!" and "Long Live France and Florence!" However, after the election of Innocent X, the supporters of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the duke of Parma, who had successfully resisted the pro-French Barberini in the War of Castro, celebrated the loudest.[160] Nevertheless, a Roman was always the most preferred candidate. When Camillo Borghese, from a Romanized Sienese family, was elected in 1605

157 For Pius V and Sixtus V, initiating the tradition of giving alms rather than dispensing money at their coronation ceremony and the papal advent called the *possesso*, see Francesco Cancellieri, *La storia de' solenni possessi de' Sommi Pontefici detti anticamente processi dopo la loro coronazione dalla Basilica Vaticana alla Lateranense* (Rome, 1802), pp. 110 and 121.

158 Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 18; and Stefano Cavallo, *An account of the life and death of Alexander the VII*, trans. P.A. Gent (London, 1667), p. 28.

159 For the bonfires, fireworks, candles, and artillery, see BAV, Urb.lat. 1073, *avviso* of 2 April 1605 (Leo XI), fol. 182v; and Urb.lat. 1093, *avviso* of 9 August 1623, fol. 589r (Urban VIII); as well as ASV, Segretario, Avvisi, t. 96, *avviso* of 17 September 1644, fol. 250r–v (Innocent X); and t. 102, *avviso* of 20 April 1655, fol. 270r (Alexander VII).

160 For the election of Leo XI, see the account of the French Cardinal Jacques-Davy Duperron in Couzard, *Une Ambassade*, p. 367. For the celebration of the Spanish, Imperialists, and supporters of the duke of Parma, see ASV, Segretario, t. 96, *avviso* of 17 September 1644, fol. 250r.

as Paul V, the French supporters in Rome forgot their disappointment at the Leo XI's death and celebrated his election with explosions of joys."[161]

The events surrounding papal conclaves represent a unique version of a public sphere connected to the ephemeral moment of Rome's vacant see and the institutional weaknesses of interregnal authorities. The conclave, supposedly a closed affair, galvanized the city as Romans of all ranks sought to penetrate its secrets. In doing so they not only expressed their opinions on the election but also sought to influence it. However, it does not match up exactly to Jürgen Habermas's bourgeois public sphere of the 18th century.[162] In Habermas's model, the public sphere was a place where the secret workings of the government were laid bare for open discussion among intellectuals in the press and at coffeehouses and parlors. In contrast, Romans experienced the political secrets of the conclave through rumor, open speculation, factionalism, and disorder. Roman public opinion never represented the vision of one segment of the population. Rather, it was fragmented into different, often competing voices. Nevertheless, the papal election was a time in which Romans of all ranks and backgrounds—nobles and commoners, brokers and bettors, French and Spanish—used a variety of means to voice their opinions on the election. In this way the public sphere surrounding the conclave and the vacant see did meet some of the criteria that Habermas established for the 18th century. While the cardinal met in the conclave, Romans subjected state affairs to intense discussion and criticism in the form of rumor, newsletters, betting, ribald verses, and pillages. Despite the efforts of interregnal authorities to limit their access to state secrets—outlawing wagering on the election and attempting to curtail ritual pillages—Romans continued to play a role in the elections throughout the early modern era. During the vacant see and papal election, the lowborn not only had access to forbidden knowledge of politics but also commented on important political events. This was a major accomplishment in an age of absolutist government when most people were barred from the "mysteries of state."[163]

161 Couzard, *Une Ambassade*, p. 388.

162 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*.

163 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "Mysteries of State: An Absolutist Concept and Its Late Medieval Origins," *The Harvard Theological Review* 48 (1955), 65–91. See also Carlo Ginzburg, "The High and the Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in idem, *Clues, Myths*, pp. 60–76.

Conclusion

In his *Commentaries*, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini depicted the reception in Rome of his election as Pope Pius II in 1458. In an account full of hubris and self-promotion that only Piccolomini could muster, he wrote,

> Once they knew for certain that Aeneas sat in Peter's chair, however, all joined in the celebrations. You would have thought that not only the people but even the beasts and the buildings of Rome were swooning with delight; everywhere there was laughter and joy . . . Before, the city had been in arms; no one seemed to trust in anything but the sword. But now, with the news that the papacy had gone to Aeneas, the atmosphere changed. What had been a city of Mars all at once became a city of—well, I will not say Venus, mother of Aeneas of Troy—but a city of Peace and Quiet. Everywhere, joy and tranquility reigned.[1]

A Bosco di Baccano and battlefield before, Rome now became a city dedicated to the goddess of love. Of course, one must take Pius II—always an exaggerator—with a grain of salt. Although the election filled the void left by the pope-elect's predecessor, he officially did not assume full authority until he was presented to the crowd gathered in St Peter's square and then crowned in the basilica's portico before a crowd of ecclesiastical and noble witnesses.[2] In the 16th and 17th centuries, the coronation generally took place a week after the election.[3]

Yet as Pius II's account reveals, early modern popes were keen to assert their authority after the election and were vigilant in restoring order to the city in the wake of the vacant see's violence. Popes therefore issued *bandi* several days before their coronation that revoked all licenses to carry weapons that had been issued by interregnal authorities. As with all papal *bandi*, officials posted them at the entrances of the city, on tavern walls, and in the major markets, with accompanying fanfare so that no one could claim ignorance of the law. The *bandi* also called on "soldiers, both private and general, hired for the occasion

1 Pius II, *Commentaries*, eds. Margaret Meserve and Marcello Simonetta (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), 1:201.

2 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 93: "As all the Pope's Tribunals cease during the vacancy of the See, so they began not their Functions again till after the Pope's Coronation, upon which all Affairs reassume their ordinary Course."

3 Luigi Fiorani, *Riti, cerimonie, feste e vita di popolo nella Roma dei papi* (Bologna, 1970), p. 141.

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of the vacant see, to leave Rome within three days" on pain of forced service in the papal galleys. These provisions also applied to "all vagabonds, men without a profession or an occupation, and those who make the profession of staying in the houses of others, vulgarly called *sgherri*, or *bravi*."[4] The latter terms referred to the youthful thugs that potentates kept around their palaces—the kind of men that cardinals and ambassadors would hire during the vacant see to serve as guards and assassins.

The governor of Rome, nominated by the new pope, hastily acted to enforce these *bandi*. After the promulgation of the *bandi*, his *sbirri* regularly scoured the streets and main squares, arresting those carrying outlawed weapons and disturbing the peace. Constables especially targeted soldiers and vagabonds that remained in Rome after the election of the pope.[5] However, confusion could still reign as Rome transitioned from the violence of the vacant see to the peace of the *sede piena*. Within a week after the election of Urban VIII on 6 August 1623, *sbirri* began arresting soldiers brought into the city during Gregory XV's vacant see. The postponement of Urban's coronation due to illness may have confused the captains and their soldiers. The soldier Tulio da Zagarolo, arrested soon after the vacant see, excused himself, saying that "Signor Giulio Mass [the Captain of Capitoline soldiers] told me that I should carry my weapons until the coronation [of the pope]."[6]

Popes were eager to lay down the law and establish peace and stability after the tumultuous interregnum. Consequently, they often made examples of men who had committed misdeeds during the vacant see. Upon their ascension to the papal throne both Gregory XIV and Innocent IX had several pasquinade writers arrested. Innocent also had fifty malefactors, apprehended during the vacant see of 1591, sent to the galleys before his coronation and refused to give clemency to the retainers of two nobles who had entered the city under a ban.[7] Clement VIII had pasquinade writers arrested and condemned the nobleman Stefano Muti to decapitation for carrying a prohibited handgun during the

4 For all quotes, see the following *bandi*: ASV, Misc. Arm. IV & V, t. 48, *bando* of 9 December 1590, p. 268, and t. 74, *bando* of 9 November 1591, p. 94. For other *bandi* related to the restoration of power after the election, see ASR, Bandi, Governatore, vol. 410, *bando* of 29 April 1585, n. p.; ASV, Misc. Arm IV & V, t. 48, *bando* of 17 September 1590, p. 267; t. 48, *bando* of 8 February 1592, p. 270; t. 48, *bando* of 7 April 1605, n. p.; and ASR, Bandi, vol. 410, *bando* of 21 September 1644, n. p.

5 For examples, see ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 342, various testimonies, 6 May 1585, fols. 59r–63v and 92r- v; ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 423, various testimonies, 1 February 1592, fols. 12r–14r; ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 553, various testimonies, 27 May 1605, fols. 13v–18r; and ASR, TCG, Cosritui, vol. 713, various testimonies, 13 August 1623, fols. 86r–87v.

6 ASR, TCG, Costituti, vol. 713, testimony of Tulio da Zagarolo, 13 August 1623, fol. 85v.

7 BAV, Urb.lat. 1059, *avvisi* of 2 and 6 November 1591, fols. 351r, 353r, and 362r.

vacant see before his coronation on 8 February 1592.[8] Even before the coronation, the election of the pontiff and his renewal of papal decrees undoubtedly proclaimed an end to the vacant see's license and violence.

The Two Ceremonies of the Papal Inauguration

Although popes began ruling shortly after the announcement of their election, tradition nevertheless dictated that their new status be ritually enacted through a double inauguration ceremony: a public coronation at the portico of St Peter's Basilica and an advent-like procession called the *possesso*, in which the pope and the city's ecclesiastical and lay elites marched from the Vatican Palace to the basilica San Giovanni in Laterano. There the pope took possession of the city of Rome as its bishop. Originally, the two ceremonies took place on the same day. Beginning with Julius II in 1503, popes began to separate the two ceremonies to give the city and private individuals enough time to honor the newly elected pontiff with triumphal arches and other decorations placed along the processional route. On average, a two-month interval separated the two ceremonies, although 17th-century popes tended to wait for an even longer interval to stage the *possesso*. In time, the delay imparted different ritual functions on the two inauguration ceremonies. The coronation broadcasted the full ascension of the pope, while the *possesso* introduced the pope to the city. Popes sought to display their power and authority as absolute lords during the procession to San Giovanni Laterano. However, the communication during the *possesso* was multivalent. His subjects talked to him with inscriptions, statues, and paintings along the route that called on the pope to be a good father and prince. The *possesso* thereby served as a "mirror for princes," holding the pope to standards of good government.

The coronation occurred in the portico of St Peter's before a gathering of cardinals, important ecclesiastics, ambassadors, and Roman nobles.[9] The pope was carried in a sedan by various subdeacons into the atrium, where he was deposited on a chair. The master of ceremonies stood before him, burning pieces of flax, while a priest intoned the ritual phrase, "Holy Father, thus does the glory of the world pass away."[10] This was performed two times, signaling

8 BAV, Urb.lat. 1060, *avvisi* of 1 and 5 February 1592, fols. 69v and 80v–81r.

9 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, pp. 86–87.

10 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 87. See also Elze, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," pp. 23–41; Paravicini-Bagliani, *Le Chiavi e la Tiara*, pp. 105–06; idem, *The Pope's Body*, pp. 29–39; and Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 460–61.

not only the vanity of earthly power but also the looking forward to his future vacant see.

The pope was then led to the door overlooking the crowd in St Peter's, where he gave his second public benediction of his pontificate, the first being when he was introduced upon the election with the words "Habemus papam." Leti noted that this public appearance was important: "he gave time to all the people . . . to see the Act of his Coronation."[11] Upon seeing the pope, the people shouted "Vivas," thereby giving him their own blessing of a long life. Up until 1560, this public display was accompanied by the throwing of silver and gold coins to the crowd gathered in the square. However, at Pius IV's coronation on Epiphany of that year, in the scramble for the money crowds trampled on many people, killing twenty-five people and seriously injuring forty more. Subsequent popes, to avoid the tumultuous contests for the coins, distributed alms to hospitals and other charitable institutions on their coronations and the day of their *possesso*, as a way of displaying their magnanimity as princes to the people.[12] The papacy, like other early modern monarchies, had moved toward more decorous coronation rites.[13]

After the public benediction, he returned to the atrium, where he was crowned with the papal tiara. Then, each of the prelates and dignitaries, starting with the elder cardinals and ending with the lay nobles, paid homage to the new pope by giving him "adoration," that is, by kissing his feet and hands in a rite that reflected the power of the pope.[14] To further highlight the coronation, three full nights of celebration ensued. Papal officials shot artillery and fireworks from Castel Sant'Angelo. The city's prelates and magnates all competed to honor the new popes by giving "their contentendness [sic] with lumieres, artillerie fires, and burning great quantities of pitched barrels."[15] No one then could claim ignorance that the city had a new ruler and that the vacant see was over.

While making his *possesso* the pope traveled in a cortege of his ecclesiastical, civic, and baronial vassals from the Vatican to his bishopric at San Giovanni in

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11 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant see*, p. 87.

12 On the accident, see Cancellieri, *La storia de' solenni possessi*, p. 109; and BAV, Urb.lat. 1039, *avviso* of 6 January 1560, fol. 114r. On the replacement of the coin-throwing with charity, see Cancellieri, pp. 110 and 119.

13 Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 282–83.

14 On importance of foot-kissing as a symbol of papal power, see Peter Burke, "Sacred Rulers, Royal Priests: Rituals of the Early Modern Popes," in idem, *Historical Anthropology*, p. 173.

15 Leti, *The ceremonies of the vacant* see, pp. 26–28 and 28; and Anonymous, *The conclave of Pope Gregory XIV* (London, 1730), p. vii.

Laterano. There, he took part in a private ceremony inside the church, in which he was invested with his symbols of episcopal authority—the papal keys and the *ferula*, or shepherd's staff. During the *possesso*, he traversed the entire city, claiming it as his and broadcasting his absolutist pretensions. The procession cast the pope as a triumphant victor, as collective entities such as foreign nations, churches, and guilds as well as private individuals decorated the streets and building on the processional path—the Via Papale—with temporary arches, flowers, rugs and tapestries, statues, and tableaux vivants.[16] Yet scholars have overemphasized the one-sidedness of the *possesso*: it was also an advent in which the pope entered Rome from the Vatican to greet his people, confirm their rights, and listen to their demands. In decorating the streets, various groups in Rome, including the *Popolo Romano*, the Jewish community, and prominent nobles and merchants, talked to the pope in a subtle dialogue.[17] The arches and other ephemera were usually adorned with epigrams and other inscriptions that called on the newly crowned pope to rule justly, maintain good government, and feed the people. Many also included admonitions to avoid being a tyrant. Implicit in this exchange was the notion that the pope's vacant see lay at any moment in the future and that imminent retribution might be taken against a pope judged to have failed in his duties to the people

16 For the early modern *possesso* as a representation of papal absolutism, see Irene Fosi, "Court and City in the Ceremony of the Possesso in the Sixteenth Century," in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700*, eds. Gianvittorio and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), pp. 31–52; and Richard Joseph Ingersoll, "The Ritual Use of Space in Renaissance Rome," doctoral dissertation, Berkeley, University of California (1985), pp. 171–223. See also Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in idem, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), pp. 121–46; and Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Rochester, NY, 1984).

17 Works that have influenced my interpretation of the *possesso* as an advent and dialogue include: Lawrence M. Bryant, "Configurations of the Community in Late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London during the Dual Monarchy," in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 3–33; idem, "The Medieval Entry Ceremony at Paris," in Bak, *Coronations*, pp. 88–18; Edward Muir, "The Eye of the Procession," in *Ritual Ways of Seeing in the Renaissance* ," ed. Nicholas Howe (South Bend, Ind., 2007), pp. 129–53; R.M. Smuts, "Public Ceremony and Royal Charisma: The English Royal Entry in London, 1485–1642," in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honor of Lawrence Stone*, eds. A.L. Beier, David Carradine, and James M. Rosenwein (Cambridge, Eng., 1989), pp. 65–94; and Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa*, pp. 471–84. Also see Susan Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial at Rome in the Twelfth Century* (Rochester, NY, 2002).

of Rome. The *possesso* therefore both closed the vacant see and held the possibility of a future vacant see before the newly crowned pope.[18]

Popes and their masters of ceremonies typically staged the *possesso* a week to several months after the coronation, usually aligning it with a Sunday or a major feast day of the Catholic liturgical calendar. The shortest interval between a coronation and a *possesso* from the time of Paul III (1534) to Alexander (1655) was four days—the *possesso* of the severe and frugal Sixtus V (1585), who refused any triumphal arches at his procession to San Giovanni in Laterano. The longest was the almost six-month period between the two inauguration ceremonies of Paul V (1605). Two months was the average for these Counter-Reformation popes, although the general trend tilted toward longer intervals in the 17th century.[19] Throughout the early modern era, popes normally postponed taking the *possesso* and displayed no concern for the lingering disorder of the vacant see. The coronation had tacitly come to serve the purpose of closing the papal interregnum. Gregory XIV officially separated the *possesso* from the coronation in 1590, thereby recognizing the practice begun by Julius II. The first historian of the *possesso*, the abbot Francesco Cancellieri, noted that from this time onward "the popes began their ministry with all the fullness of their supreme authority on the day of the coronation."[20] But why would Gregory XIV publicly recognize the separation of the two inaugural ceremonies after almost a century of tacit tradition? The answer lies in the long vacant see of 1590–92, a period that saw the death of four popes and, as we have seen, the onset of a number of catastrophes for the Papal States. Bandits, due to the lack of strong leadership, infested the Roman countryside. Through the coronation the papacy ritually emphasized the vacant see's conclusion; meanwhile, the *possesso* came to represent an advent that held the pope to standards of good government.

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18 Martine Boiteux, "Parcours ritual romains à l'époque moderne," in *Cérémonial et ritual à Rome, XV–XIX^e siècle*, eds. Maria Antionetta Visceglia and Catherine Brice (Rome, 1997), pp. 86–117; and Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: A City Out of Print* (Minneapolis, 2001), p. 170.

19 Some popes did not even have a *possesso*. Marcellus II (1555) and Urban VII (1590) did not live long enough to make the procession. Paul III did not stage a *possesso*; instead, he allowed the Roman baronage and the civic magistrates to stage a celebration, complete with jousting, on the night of his coronation at the Vatican. See Cancellieri, *La storia de' solenni possessi*, pp. 90–105, 121–27, and 168–87; and Ingersol, "Ritual Use of Space," pp. 198–213.

20 Cancellieri, *La storia de' solenni possessi*, p. 128. See also Francesco Albertonio, *Ragguaglio della cavalcata di N.S. Gregorio XIV per pigliare il posseso fatto il giorno di S. Lucia, 1590* (Rome, 1590), n. p.

The calls for the pope to be a just ruler were not unique to Gregory XIV's *possesso*. By the time of the Counter-Reformation popes, themes of justice and the militant church had come to replace the "self-promotion" of the Renaissance popes Julius II and Leo X.[21] But processions after 1590 tended to emphasize the traditional qualities of a good prince and pastor. The *Popolo Romano* as well as private individuals used the occasion to announce to the pope their expectations of good government. These displays were more than laudatory odes to the absolutist pope; they were a tacit but firm reminder that the people held the popes to a standard of princely government. They listed the traits that the people demanded of the pope. For example, the Sienese spice dealer Marc'Antonio Ciappi decorated his shop, the Golden Dragon, in the Banchi during the *possessi* from Gregory XIV to Gregory XV (1621).[22] His shop sat at the corner of the street that ran across the Ponte Sant'Angelo to the Vatican. This allowed the spice dealer to set up two stages to greet the pope as he crossed the Tiber. On these stages Ciappi placed statues and tableaux vivants that represented the allegorical traits a good ruler should possess. The traits that Ciappi sought in a pope were Peace, Charity, and Abundance. He had children distribute bread to the poor and candies to passing noblemen. The allegories and his charity were meant to stimulate similar activity in the pope. A pamphlet that Ciappi had written about his display for Gregory XV's procession read:

> The great liberality of Ciappi was praised and acclaimed by everyone, but principally his beautiful and learned invention, wanting by means of children so dressed, who distributed bread to the Poor, to denote the works of Charity, so necessary to all, and in particular to Princes.[23]

The arch that the *Popolo Romano* posted at the *possesso* of Urban VIII (1623) demonstrated similar concerns over good government. The language, as with that of Ciappi's and others, was a subtle mix of flattery and tacit expectations. The statues and imagery of the triumphal arch celebrated the Barberini pope's talents as a humanist and poet. But there was a sharper edge to the allegory of the display. Ten allegorical statues along the balustrade greeted

21 Fosi, "Court and City," p. 34.

22 Cancellieri, *La storia de' solenni possessi*, pp. 139, 165–66, 179–88, and 189–92. Also see the pamphlets that Marcantonio Ciappi had written about his displays; *Relatione del vago, et nobile apparato fatto alla Spetiera del Drago in Banchi* (Rome, 1605), and *Descrittione del vago et gentil apparato fatto dal Signore M.A. Ciappi Senese alla Spetiera del Drago in Banchi* (Rome, 1621).

23 *Descrittione del vago et gentil apparato*, n. p.

the pope as he climbed the steps to the Capitol. Most represented his scholarly interests in Greek, history, poetry, and the humanities, but two statues, representing Abundance and Public Felicity, stand for the concerns with good government. The fluctuating price of bread and the threat of famine were major concerns in the Papal States during the early 1620s. The civic magistrates held the pope responsible for keeping the people content with bread.

Agostino Mascardi, whom the civic officials commissioned to write a lengthy account of the festivities at the Capitol for Urban's *possesso*, underlined this point more forcefully. Commenting on the two statues, Mascardi maintained that

> the Prince must keep the state well provided because under the heap of grain can easily hide the errors of his government; so that he cannot ever silence the complaints of his subjects in a better way than by filling their mouths.

The solution was to satisfy the people with "bread and circuses." Almost prophetic with regard to the latter years of Urban's pontificate, Mascardi reminded the pope that he must not fail to keep the people fed in times of famine in order "to avoid the insult of posters that are attached to the walls at night in his dishonor."[24] Here, the civic officials noted the blossoming of invectives, which writers critical of the pope posted on Pasquino, especially during the vacant see. Mascardi ended his description of the display by praising Urban for knowing the difference between a prince and a tyrant. He highlighted the traditional moral economy of the Roman people and their view of the pope as a ruler.

The *Popolo Romano* underscored their call for a pope to provide for the needs of the people by giving to charity. The civic official Gigli noted that between the election and the coronation of the popes from Gregory XV to Alexander VII, the *Popolo Romano* had held a mass in honor of the newly elected pope at the civic church, Santa Maria in Aracoeli. After the mass they also distributed bread to the poor.[25] During the *possesso*, the *Popolo Romano* quenched the thirst of its audience with fountains of wine that poured from the mouths of the two basalt lions at the foot of the Capitoline stairs. And while the senator of Rome paid homage to the pope upon his arrival at the Capitol, civic officials

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24 All quotes come from Agostino Mascardi, *Le pompe del Campidoglio per la santità di nostro Signore Urbano VIII quando pigliò il possesso* (Rome, 1624), p. 35. Mascardi's text has been reprinted in Renato Diez, *Il trionfo della parola: Studio sulle relazioni di feste nella Roma barocca, 1623–1667* (Rome, 1986), p. 135.

25 Gigli, *Diario*, 1:84, 2:432, and 2:740.

threw silver coins embossed with the papal coat-of-arms to the people gathered to see the ceremony.[26] The *Popolo Romano* thus claimed the ritual space of the *possesso* to act as patrons and to call on the pope to follow standards of princely rule.

As the pope traversed the city, he was also greeted by the people of Rome, who watched the *possesso* unfold from roofs and stages built for the event. Although relegated to the sidelines, they did not play a passive role in the ceremony. During Gregory XIV's cavalcade to San Giovanni, Albertonio noted that "the streets were full of an infinite multitude that in competition with the highest voices acclaimed the Pontiff: Viva, Viva!"[27] Perhaps the members of the crowd hoped to catch the pope's attention as he was carried in a sedan. Here, the mutuality of the *possesso* is revealed; the people and the pope blessed each other. The pope gave his benediction to the people and the people did the same with their shouted acclamations, in the hope that the usually old ecclesiastic would have a long pontificate. The English traveler John Evelyn, observing Innocent X's *possesso* with a birds-eye view from Santa Maria in Aracoeli, summed up the exchange: "he went holding up two fingers, and blessing the people and multitudes upon their knees, looking out their windows and houses with loud viva's [*sic*] and acclamations of felicity to their Prince."[28]

Similar to monarchical advents, the *possesso* connected the pope and his subjects in a shared vision for the future. The pope began his pontificate not only with a clean slate but also with the goodwill of the people. Yet, the pope could easily squander this approval through unpopular policies that included imposing new taxes on staples and failing to provide abundance. The allegorical displays that popes passed during the procession held up popular standards of princely rule to which the people held him accountable. If he did not live up to these standards, criticism would surely follow in the form of pasquinades. This was made transparent as the pope's cavalcade rode past Pasquino on the way to San Giovanni in Laterano, a potent reminder of what could lay in store for his future vacant see. This was made more explicit during Gregory XIV's *possesso*, when some wags dressed Pasquino as Justice. But the final justice in the minds of many Romans was the vacant see, in which they could seek revenge against the memory and monuments of popes who had ruled unjustly.

26 For the fountains of wine, see Mascardi in Diez, *Il trionfo della parola*, p. 130; for the scattering of coins, see Anonymous, *A new history of the Roman conclave*, p. 28.

27 Albertonio, *Ragguaglio della cavalcata di N.S. Gregorio XIV*, n. p.

28 E.S. de Beer, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Oxford, 1959), p. 148.

The Vacant See, Popes, and the People

Through the lapse in papal authority, the vacant see revealed the troubles with Rome's prince with two souls. The ecclesiastical and ephemeral aspects of the papal office, connected to its elective nature, checked the absolutist ambitions and state-building efforts of early modern popes. Unlike hereditary monarchs, the pope could not pass his title and its power to his relatives. Consequently, the papacy could not maintain governmental continuity and stability. With the pope's death, papal tribunals ceased to function and would not resume their normal activity until the election of his successor. Due to the political intrigues of the conclave and foreign influence on the election, the College of Cardinals generally took two months in the early modern era to choose an occupant of St Peter's throne, although sometimes they took even longer (as in the cases of 1559, 1590, and 1655).

No governmental authority could adequately fill the void left in the wake of the pope's death. The College of Cardinals and the *Popolo Romano*—the two principal interregnal authorities—challenged one another over jurisdictional hegemony during the vacant see and generally cancelled out each other's effectiveness in maintaining law and order. In several cases, the very political structures of the vacant see carried the seeds of discord and violence, as papal *sbirri*, under the college's control, frequently clashed with the civic militia while on patrol. The populace also sought to take advantage of this jurisdictional confusion by taking the law into their hands. Brawls and violent altercations based on a need for revenge dramatically increased, since Romans saw the vacant see as the optimal time to practice violent self-help.

Other traditions and practices of the vacant see further increased the violence and disorder. The opening of the prisons at the pope's death filled the streets with petty criminals—some of whom were debtors who wanted to take revenge against their creditors. The reliance on men from outside of Rome as soldiers watching the city and conclave only exacerbated the situation. Cardinals and barons employed many of these men as well, who often supplemented their income with theft or by serving as thugs and assassins to those seeking revenge during the vacant see. Not only did the papacy regularly lose effective leadership during the vacant see, it also lost its monopoly on violence. The vacant see of 1590 demonstrated the inadequacy of papal governance. Neither the College of Cardinals nor the *Popolo Romano* could stop the incessant bandit raids into the Roman countryside or find an adequate source of grain to feed the city in the midst of famine.

Finally, Romans held the pope to standards of princely rule, based on his role as the father of his people. This standard was rooted in a traditional moral

economy that held provisioning the city with an abundant and cheap food supply as the pope's primary duty. Popes who failed to do this—especially those who placed taxes on staples such as bread and oil to finance war and building projects—suffered popular chastisement in death.[29] Romans tolerated and even expected the nepotism of the popes; they balked only when its excesses led to high taxes. The vacant see thus allowed Romans to do and say things that the papacy forbade while the pope lived. The memory of popes who did not meet the expectations of the populace suffered during the vacant see: pasquinades and popular songs besmirched their names, and, in the cases of Paul IV, Sixtus V, and Urban VIII, crowds sought to destroy their statues at the Capitol.

The vacant see was a regular check on the absolutist pretensions of early modern popes, one that was rooted in the ecclesiastical nature of the papacy. In spite of the state-building efforts and centralizing policies of 16th- and 17th-century popes, the vacant see laid bare the weaknesses of papal governance.[30] The populace held its paradoxical prince to traditional standards of rules and displayed its anger during the vacant see if these were not met. The clerical bureaucracy could not fill the void left by the death of their master.

The vacant see cannot be said to have been the main cause or reason behind the weakness of the papacy. It certainly contributed to it. In this regard, the papacy shared much in common with other elective monarchies, such as those in the Holy Roman Empire and the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, which failed to become effective powers in the early modern era. Unlike the latter two states, the papacy, as a state, survived until it was absorbed by the Italian nation-state in 1870. It survived, at least in Rome, because, as the observant Venetian ambassador Alive Mocenigo suggested, its people derived a plethora of benefits from living in the capital of Christendom and the Papal States. The vacant see ensured that Romans could critique their leaders, but no one seriously considered replacing their paradoxical prince.

29 Reinhardt, *Überleben im der frühnzeitlichen Stadt*, pp. 41–48; and Revel, "A Capital City's Privilege," pp. 7–49. Cf. Thompson, "The Moral Economy," pp. 76–136.

30 See Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, and Delumeau, "Le progrès de la centralisation," pp. 399–410. For critics of this view, see Caravale and Caracciolo, *Lo Stato pontificio*; Alberto Caracciolo, "Sovrano pontefice e sovrani assoluti," *Quaderni storici* 52 (1983), 279–86; and Fosi, "Justice and Its Image," pp. 75–95.

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